

Lily Potter and the Worst Holiday

Chapter One

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WARNING: Harsh Language and Adult Themes

Chapter One Summary: For Lily Potter, Halloween always dredges up memories of the day her son was murdered. Now, sixteen years to the day of her son's murder, Professor Potter must deal with six visitors. Ships include: Lily/James and Harry/Hermione.

For Muggles, Halloween was a time for children to dress up as witches, monsters, or heroes. For magical folk, Halloween is not known for costumes, rather it is known as a time for festivals and feasts.

But, for Lily Potter, Halloween is a time that always brings up memories of pain, suffering, and death. It is because of these memories that Lily hated Halloween.

She tried not to show her dislike of that day to any of her students. They were usually in a jolly mood on Halloween, and Lily didn't want to dampen their spirits with stories of her past Halloweens.

In the past, Lily had always found an excuse to separate herself from the students on this holiday. Unfortunately for her plans, this Halloween fell on a Hogsmeade Weekend, and Lily was needed as a chaperone.

On an average Hogsmeade Weekend, the students were always bustling between shops and having a "grand ol' time". Given that this weekend was also Halloween, the children should have been nearly delirious with happiness.

But there seemed to be something in the air around Hogsmeade. Everyone appeared to sense it. It was as if they were anticipating something big, something unknown. Whatever that something was, it made the hairs on the back of Lily's neck stand on end.

Someone bumped into Lily with a thud.

"Sorry, Professor Potter," Dean Thomas apologized. "I didn't see you..."

"It's alright Mr. Thomas," Lily said to the seventh year Gryffindor. Her mind flashed to another horrible Halloween memory as she looked at Dean. Two of his housemates were killed by a Troll six years ago today. Lily was with a few of her fellow professor when they had stumbled across the ruined girls' loo and found the mutilated bodies of the boy and girl. As horrifying as that memory was, it paled in comparison to that one particular Halloween, sixteen years ago. Her mind involuntarily drifted back to terrible events of that horrible day:

Their feet pounded up the stairs as the monster's cold high laugh filled the house. Lily begged to every god and spirit that she could think of, 'please let me get there in time!'

But, with the sound of a small pop, the laughter stopped. The logical part of her brain realized that the monster had apparated away and they were too late. But Lily refused to heed that part of her mind; she refused to believe that her baby was gone.

Lily and her husband, James, froze in the doorway to the nursery. They both saw the motionless lump under the covers. James gasped and fell roughly to his knees. Lily, still refusing to believe what her mind was telling her and what her eyes saw, staggered towards the small lump.

*"Harry...b-ba- baby," her voice trembled more than her hands did.
"Harry, please wake up..."*

"Professor Potter," Dean's voice drew Lily out of her memories, out of her daily nightmare. "Are you alright?"

"Yes, Mr. Thomas, thank you," Lily said. "Just keep an eye on where you are walking."

The young man nodded his head and walked away. As Lily looked around the village, it was obvious that everyone was distracted, not just Dean.

A smile appeared on Lily's face as she saw a tall girl carrying two bottles of butterbeer walk toward her.

"Hello, Alice," Lily greeted the fifteen year-old girl.

"Lo, Mum," Alice replied as she handed Lily a bottle. "How are you doing?"

"I'm fine, love," Lily responded. Alice knew that her mother wasn't telling her the truth, but the young girl knew not to press her.

After Lily took a sip of her drink, she told her daughter, "You shouldn't bother with your mum. Go and have a good time with your friends."

"You're not a bother, mum," Alice said with a smile. "Besides, I rarely get to spend any time with you outside of school."

"How are the two smartest and most beautiful witches in the world?" a familiar masculine voice called out to the two Potter women. Alice broke from her mother and rushed to her father, jumping around his neck in a hug.

"DADDY!" She shouted in his ear. "I haven't seen you in ages!"

"Alice, luv," James chuckled, "I saw you less than a month ago."

"Oh, tosh! It felt like forever to me"

James staggered over to his wife with his daughter still hanging from his neck. Lily would never cease to be amazed at how much Alice resembled her father, James. Not in her facial features, mind you. She believed that Alice closely resembled Lily's own mother. But Alice did remind Lily of James in many other ways. She moved like he did, and she made the same gestures as James did when she

talked. The girl had inherited James' long limbs, and at 15 years old, was almost as tall as her father was (which made her a full head taller than most of her fellow students in her year). Unfortunately, in Lily's mind, Alice had inherited her full, auburn curly-mane from her mother.

"Lo, Love," James said as he included Lily in the family embrace. "How are you holding up?"

Lily attempted to answer, but her lips quivered ever so slightly. She settled for a simple shrug in response. She knew she could not lie to him and say she was 'All right', because she knew he was feeling the same thing. He was there with Lily when it happened; he saw the small form lying unmoving in the crib. He was the one who had pried her hands off of their son's cold body as she begged for the baby to wake up. James tried to smile and failed. He kissed his wife in hopes of comforting her.

A single tear fell from Lily's eye. James and Alice held on to Lily. She didn't just cry for her own sake; she cried because James had lost his first born son. Lily also cried because Alice never got to meet her brother, and because Harry never got the chance to teach Remmy how to play Quidditch.

"Where's Remmy?" James asked as if he had heard Lily's thoughts. He always did seem to have the knack for knowing what Lily was thinking.

"Five," Lily responded and held up her hand with her fingers extended. James furrowed his brow and gave Lily a puzzled look.

"Four," she continued and lowered one of her fingers a second later despite James' confused look. "Three..." another finger lowered, "two..." and then another, "one."

"DADDY!" a blur shouted as it, or rather he, jumped into the group hug as Lily finished her countdown.

"Daddy have you seen Zonko's they have all this cool stuff and then the sweet shop Honnyduke's has cockroach clusters and there's a new broom..." the young auburn-haired boy rambled out.

“Remmy,” James interrupted his son, “say hello to your mum.”

“Lo, Mum,” Remmy said with a smile and then continued to ramble to his father about the joys of Hogsmeade:

“...newbroomtheNimbusX2that’ssupposedtobefasterthenthefireboltbut nothingsfasterthenthefirebolt...”

After James responded with a few “Yes”’s and one “That’s wild”, Remmy fell silent and as he finally noticed the sad look in his parents’ eyes.

“Oh, sorry...” Remmy mumbled. “I forgot what day it was.”

“It’s alright, luv,” Lily said as she rubbed her son’s back.

“No it’s not,” Remmy replied mournfully. “I shouldn’t be happy when you’re not.”

“Remmy, luv, you couldn’t be more wrong,” James said with an honest smile.

“You being happy is what makes us happy,” Lily finished and kissed her son.

“And here’s poor Uncle Sirius, left out of this lovely display of affection,” a tall dark haired man said overdramatically.

“SIRIUS!” the two children screamed and lunged at their parents’ friend.

“OOF!” Sirius grunted as the young boy and girl hugged him. “Geroff, you two.”

“Hello, James,” Remus Lupin said as he walked up to the growing group.

“Good morning, Professor Lupin,” Alice greeted him.

“Alice Potter,” Lupin playfully chastised the girl. “How many times have I told you that outside of the classroom you and your brother are to refer to me as ‘Remus’?”

“Sorry, Pro... R-Remus,” Alice stuttered and looked like she had done something terribly wrong and got caught doing it.

“I would never have thought that saying my name would be as difficult as saying ‘Voldemort’,” Remus chuckled. To Lily’s displeasure, Remmy and Alice shuddered at the Dark Lord’s name. Lily would have lectured her children again on how they shouldn’t fear a silly name, but she saw a red-haired girl, who was passing by when Remus said “Voldemort,” jump and squeak in fear as she heard the Dark Lord’s name spoken aloud.

“Ms. Weasley,” Lily said with compassion to the coppery haired young witch, “it’s just a name. No one should fear a name, dear.” ‘*Just fear the man*’ she thought to herself.

“Sorry, Professor Potter,” Ginny said meekly. She then turned to Lupin. “Professor Lupin, can I ask you a question? I know we’re not in class, but I’m really having trouble with the shield charm.”

“Well, let’s head back to the castle and I can help you with your problem,” Lupin replied as Ginny started to walk towards her DADA Professor. “Most people have a problem with that charm. Usually it just a matter of confidence...”

Just as Ginny was walking by Sirius, she bumped into something, or someone who wasn’t there.

“Ooof,” the person who was not there exclaimed. “Oops.”

Lily looked at Sirius with a glare that she saved for her most bothersome pupils. Upon noticing Lily’s stance and expression, both Remus and James unconsciously took a step back, whereas Sirius was frozen in place with a guilty smile on his face.

“Sirius Phineas Black!” Lily scolded him, and he almost literally shrunk a few inches. Remmy muttered in horror “...All three names!”

“Your daughter is only a second year!” Lily continued. “Michelle is *NOT* allowed outside of the castle grounds until next year!”

“Looks like you’ve been busted mate,” James said sympathetically.

“Oi!” Sirius shot back at his best friend. “It’s your cloak!”

Lily spun and cast a look at her husband that would make most men run in fear. Her brilliant green eyes were blazing as she stepped towards James so that their noses were just a few inches apart. James cringed as he prepared himself for the approaching verbal onslaught.

But Lily’s tirade on school rules was abruptly cut off when the earth shook beneath their feet, as if a large explosion occurred far away. Everyone in Hogsmeade, students and adults alike, looked at one another hoping that someone could explain what had just happened. Lily felt another ripple through the magic that surrounded her. Again, the ground quaked for a brief moment.

“Daddy, I’m scared,” Lily heard Michelle Black’s disembodied voice coming from next to Sirius. He quickly wrapped his arms around his invisible daughter. Lily felt Remmy clutching onto her robes as the ground trembled yet again.

The magic in the air began to throb and Lily’s skin prickled.

“Kids, get behind us,” Lily told Alice, Remmy, Ginny, and Michelle. She, James, Remus, and Sirius stood protectively in front of the children.

Then, it happened.

A great wind blew out of nowhere, nearly knocking Lily down. She heard screams and shouts as other people around her were unable to keep their footing and fell roughly to the ground. Lily had to shield her eyes with her arm as a cloud of dust and dirt blew by her.

As the dust settled, Lily saw six... *forms* in the town square. For a split second, she thought they were simply great globs of black mud, but then one of the forms stood up.

They were people!

Three of the forms lay motionless on the ground while two of the other forms were barely moving. The one that stood up was obviously

a boy or a small man judging by his size and build. His left arm swung limply at his side, clearly broken in several places. He staggered for two or three steps then fell to the ground with a thump.

That's when everyone began to panic.

The scene erupted into a near-riot within seconds; people were screaming and running in blind terror. Some of the smaller students were being knocked to the ground inadvertently by other students and the citizens of Hogsmeade.

Remus stepped forward and pointed his wand at his throat and muttered the incantation for the Sonorus Charm.

“Hogwarts Students!” Remus shouted in his amplified voice. “Calm down!” The shocked students stopped panicking and looked at their DADA Professor and the others stopped running.

Lily rushed up to the motionless bodies and performed a quick Diagnostic Charm. It was a simple charm that she had learned in the war with Voldemort. It basically warned the caster if the victim had any life threatening injuries. The students, Lily assumed they were students as they appeared to be around their mid to late teens, were beaten and battered but nothing life threatening, luckily they were just unconscious. The two forms that had barely been moving before now had fallen unconscious as well.

“Prefects, escort the other students back to the castle,” Remus’ voice boomed through the streets. Lily preformed the Diagnosis Charm again on the boy who had staggered a few steps; he was the only one of the group still moving. He, like the other five, was completely coated from head to toe in the thick black ooze. His spectacles were covered with muck, rendering him temporarily blind.

“Students: proceed back to the castle in a calm and orderly fashion,” Remus ordered in his magically amplified voice.

The bespectacled boy seemed to react to Remus’ voice. It was obvious to Lily that he mustered up the last bit of his strength and said so weakly that only Lily could hear:

“Moony... Moony... warn Dumbledore...” his voice croaked, “Voldemort has... Time Turner...”

And with a groan, the boy collapsed.

Remus ended the Sonorus Charm and turned his attention to Ginny, Alice, and Remmy. “You three, please go back to the castle and inform the headmaster what has happened.”

“Most of them a few minor injuries,” announced Lily. “A few cuts, some burns, and mild broken bones. This one is the worst of the lot,” Lily gestured to the boy. “But they seem to be suffering from exhaustion.”

“We have to get them to Poppy right now!” James stated. “Lily, Remus, and I will transport them to the castle. Sirius, you take Michelle back through the passage under the Whomping Willow.”

Within minutes, the three adults had levitated the six children from Hogsmeade to the Hospital Wing at Hogwarts. The walls of the entrance hall were lined with curious students. They watched as Lily, James, and Remus levitated the six unknown people into the Hospital Ward.

“Lily,” Dumbledore said as he walked up to her, “your children and Ms. Weasley told me what happened. Are any of them awake?”

“No, but one of them said something... odd,” Lily said. “This boy said something about Voldemort having a Time Turner.”

“A Time Turner,” Albus repeated as he stroked his long white beard.

“But Albus, he didn’t say ‘You-Know-Who’ or any rubbish like that,” Lily continued. “He said ‘Voldemort’ and without going into a mild panic attack.”

Lily could count on one hand the number of people who could say “Voldemort” without shivering or have a panic attack. Unfortunately, her two children were not ones she could include in her count. It seemed they had picked up the Wizarding world’s silly fear of the name “Voldemort.” No matter how many times she tried to break

Alice and Remmy of their irrational fright of the name, they could not say it.

“You’re certain that he said ‘Time Turner’?” Albus asked.

“Positive,” Lily confirmed. “What are you thinking Albus?”

“Something that I would like to prove, or disprove before mentioning,” he answered in his normal cryptic tone. Albus turned from Lily and walked over to Madam Pomfrey. “Poppy, may I have a sample of this substance coating the children?”

While the Headmaster was busy with the school nurse, Lily turned towards James, Remus, and Sirius, who had just joined them.

“The boy said another odd thing,” Lily said in a hushed tone so that only the three men could hear her. “He seemed to recognize Remus’ voice.”

“What’s so unusual about that?” Remus asked.

“He called you ‘Moony’,” Lily answered. Remus stared gob smacked at Lily.

“How can that be?” James asked.

“We’re the only four people who know Remus by that name,” Sirius said.

“Peter knows the name as well,” Lily answered with a touch of bitterness in her voice.

After a few moments Poppy handed the headmaster a flask filled with the dark ooze.

“I am going to run a few test on this,” Dumbledore said while examining the substance. “Lily, would you be so kind as to assist Poppy with these children?”

“All right, the lot of you, out!” Madame Pomfrey shouted and ushered everyone, except for Lily, out of the Ward. After she closed the doors,

Poppy turned to Lily and said, “I will take the three on the right and you’ll take the ones on the left.”

Lily was not as skilled a healer as Poppy, but she did pick up the basics during the war with Voldemort. She walked to the nearest bed and performed a cleansing charm to remove the inky black substance from the body. With a soft pop, the unknown ooze disappeared, and Lily saw a young girl who looked vaguely familiar. Something struck Lily as being odd about the way the girl looked however. She wore thick-rimmed glasses and had dark black hair, but her school uniform seemed to be decades old. Lily had seen photos of James’ mother when she was at Hogwarts; in those photos she wore a similar uniform.

She pushed her ponderings into the back of her mind. Lily’s primary focus was to make sure that these children were healed. She removed the girl’s wand, which was still tightly gripped in her hand, and placed it on the bedside table.

“This is odd, Lily,” Poppy called out from her side of the room. “This one seems to be wearing some kind of a costume.”

“A costume?” Lily asked as she removed the girl’s glasses and placed them next to her wand.

“Yes, it looks like she transfigured her robes to have scales, and she is wearing some sort of funny little horn on her nose,”

“Well, Muggle children have a tradition of wearing costumes on Halloween,” Lily stated as she turned her attention back to her patient. “Maybe these children picked that tradition up for some reason...”

Lily froze as she noticed that the unconscious black-haired girl lying in front of her had coppery red eyebrows. Lily tapped her wand on the girl’s head and said: “*Finite.*”

Before Lily’s eyes, the girl’s black hair changed magically to a fiery red.

“Good Lord!” Lily exclaimed. “This is Ginny Weasley.”

It was very confusing for Lily; Ginny had been standing right behind her when these six children appeared. But this girl was obviously Ginny, even though there were subtle differences. This Ginny's hair was much shorter than the other's. She was also noticeably thinner than the Ginny that Lily knew, as if this one had been sick.

"Lily, this one's Luna Lovegood!" Poppy cried out. "But, I just saw her in the Entrance Hall. How can we have two duplicates of students?"

"Let's make sure these children are stable," Lily said after thinking for a moment, "before we worry about anything else."

Lily waved her wand over Ginny's clothes and muttered "*Evanesco*," and the girl's old school uniform disappeared. Lily then performed a more detailed Diagnostic Charm. An aura appeared covering Ginny's body, with different colors and shapes hovering over her injured body parts. Each color indicated what type of wound the girl had and its severity.

"Nothing too serious," Lily remarked as she examined the girl. "A few scrapes and bruises, I can fix this one."

After Lily performed a few simple healing charms, a purplish haze hovering over one of Ginny's ankle caught her attention. The color indicated that she had broken her ankle and had it healed some time in the past.

"Poppy, have you ever had to heal a broken ankle on Ginny?" Lily asked.

"No, never," Poppy replied.

Another odd haze in Ginny's aura caught Lily's eye. A faint red tint covered her entire body.

"Poppy, come take a look at this." Lily called over. "I can't figure this past injury out. It's a light red glow all over her body."

"What? Let me see!" Poppy said loudly and rushed over to Ginny's bedside. After a moment of looking the girl over, Poppy exclaimed, "Merlin! This girl has had some of her life-force drained!"

"That's serious dark magic!" Lily said. "Will she be all right?"

"It looks as if she's only lost a few years off of her life expectancy," Poppy replied. "But what happened to this Ginny? Who could have done this?"

"I don't know," Lily responded. "Was there anything out of the ordinary with your Luna?"

"I had to heal a mild fracture in her tibia, but it would appear that she has had several ribs broken as well as a concussion sometime in the past," Poppy stated. "Ms. Lovegood came in two weeks ago with a head-cold, and I did a thorough check-up on her at that time. I can tell you with certainty that she has never had such injuries."

"Let's check on the others," Lily said. "Hopefully there will be more clues as to what's happening."

Poppy walked back to her side of the ward and began to work on the next body. Lily paused and wondered what had happened to this Ginny. Could this Ginny be a magical copy of the Ginny that she knew? Why did someone drain some of her life-force? Was she attacked by some Dark Wizard that Lily didn't know of?

"LILY!" Poppy called out in panic. Lily turned to see that the nurse had already cleaned the next child on the next bed. "It's... it's... Ron Weasley!"

"What?" Lily pulled a blanket up to Ginny's neck before rushing over to Poppy's side. "It can't be. I found his body..."

Lily stopped as she looked at the unconscious body of Ron Weasley. Her mind flashed to the last time she saw him alive, and whole, six years ago. She saw him during the Halloween Feast, before Quirrel announced that he saw a troll in the dungeons. The professors had thought that all the students were safely returned to their dormitories. Minerva and Lily were patrolling the corridors when they heard Percy Weasley screaming. The two professors rushed toward the cries for help that were coming from outside the girls' bathroom. Lily saw the massive troll swing his club at Percy, and instantly used the Summoning Charm on the boy. As Percy flew to safety, Minerva

transfigured the troll into a harmless field mouse. Percy had gone into shock and was unable to tell the teachers why he was standing outside the girls' bathroom. He just stared at the door to the bathroom. Lily got an uneasy feeling in her stomach as she followed his gaze. She stood, walked into the bathroom and found the two mutilated bodies.

Obviously, this boy was not the same Ron Weasley. Ron died when he was only eleven. This boy, or rather, this young man was obviously in his late teens. As if he hadn't met the same fate as Ron and Hermione, and had aged six years.

"Wait a moment," Lily said distractedly. She looked at the remaining children and saw that two were boys and the person she was going to work on next was a girl. She walked to the unknown girl and once again performed the cleaning spell.

"*Scourgify!*" Lily muttered and the black ooze disappeared from the girl's body. Lily saw what she expected: untamable bushy brown hair. The same bushy brown hair that was matted with blood and gore the last time she saw it.

"Hermione Granger," Lily stated.

"But... but they're dead," Poppy stuttered. "I had to put their bodies back together. How can this be?"

"Let's focus on fixing these kids, first." Lily repeated. "Then we can figure out what happened."

Lily studied the young woman's face and saw a little bit of Paullina and Edward, Hermione's parents, in her features. Lily had acted as the couple's grief counselor after their daughter was killed and she had grown close to the couple. In fact, when Edward and Paullina decided to have another child, they named Lily as Emilia's godmother.

Lily removed Hermione's rags to continue her examination. She thought idly on what type of costume she was wearing that it was made of rags. Lily performed the diagnostic charm again and noticed that Hermione had dislocated her right shoulder. Lily muttered an incantation and the young woman's shoulder popped back into place.

Lily gasped out loud as she saw a purple gash in Hermione's aura, diagonally across her chest. She had seen the same would nearly a dozen times during the war. It was called the *Viscus Pinso*; also known as the "Organ Crusher Hex." It was a hex designed to pulp the victim's heart and lungs. Someone had tried to murder this poor girl.

"What did these children run into?" Poppy asked from Ron's beside. "This boy was mauled by some magical creature in the past. He has wounds all over his arms and torso."

"Hermione was hit with a low powered *Viscus Pinso*," Lily informed Poppy.

"Good Gods!"

Lily stroked Hermione's hair and thought to herself, '*How am I going to tell Paullina and Edward?*'

"Oh, my god!" Lily heard Poppy mutter. Lily noticed that the old nurse had already moved on to the fifth child. "Lily... it's Neville Longbottom!"

Lily knitted her brow and thought aloud:

"We have two students who are 'duplicates' of other students. We also have two students who died in their first year, and appear to be six years older. And we have a student who was murdered at the Tri-Wizard Tournament almost two years ago... Could that mean..."

Lily quickly walked over to the final student and noticed, unlike the others who were unconscious and still, this one was restless, like he was having a bad dream. She cast the Scourgify Charm, expecting to see a living and breathing Cedric Diggory, but instead found an unknown boy. Lily examined the young man; he wore glasses and had an oddly shaped scar, a sort of lighting-bolt, on his forehead. The boy had blond wavy hair and a comically broad chin.

Although she could not recognize him, this boy felt familiar. Like she had known him for a long time. 'Maybe,' she reasoned to herself, '*he's a duplicate of one of the more quiet students.*'

"Lily, do you recognize your boy yet?" Poppy asked her, as she continued her work on Neville.

"No, but he... it feels like I should know him."

"He looks like that fool Lockhart," Poppy appraised from over Lily's shoulder. "Only younger and funnier looking, almost like someone drew a caricature of him."

"No, it's not that," Lily responded. Something about this boy struck a cord in her. Poppy returned to Neville's side as Lily realized that she was stroking the unknown boy's hair. She also noticed that he had calmed somewhat at her touch, though he remained somewhat restless.

Lily removed the boy's brightly colored robes and cast the Diagnostic Charm once more. He was the worst of the lot. His left arm was broken in three different places and he had multiple burns and cuts which she applied ointments and used charms to correct. After his injuries were healed, Lily was stunned at the amount of previous injuries this boy had suffered.

"Poppy, when you're done with Longbottom, give me a hand, if you will?" Lily asked as she ran her hand gently over the boy's multiple scars.

"My word!" Poppy exclaimed as she saw all the different colors in the boy's aura, indicating his different wounds. "What has this one been through...? All of the bones in his right arm have been re-grown."

"Correct me if I'm mistaken," Lily asked as she pointed to the boy's ankle and the inside of his upper forearm, "but these were caused by a magical creature?"

"Yes, but you'll notice the slight color variations, it means that each was caused by a different creature," Poppy explained. "And look here, at the back of his right hand; it looks like he was forced to use a Blood Quill."

Lily cradled the boy's hand as she examined it and saw the words "*I must not tell lies*" carved into the flesh.

“But what about these two scars?” Lily asked, pointing to the lightning-bolt scar on his forehead and a jagged “X” over his heart. Lily did not notice that she hadn’t let go of the boy’s hand.

“I have no idea; the aura over both scars is black,” Poppy said as she knitted her brow. “In all my years, I’ve never seen a black aura before.”

“But it is obvious that this boy must have been hit by the same curse or hex seeing that both scars share the same color.”

After a moment Poppy sighed sadly.

“I think he is a Muggle-born,” Poppy said sadly.

“What makes you say that?” Lily asked.

“Do you see the faint green tinge that covers his entire aura?” Poppy said with sad eyes. “That indicates that he had suffered malnutrition as a child. There is a good chance that this boy was neglected.”

“You think he was abused?” Lily asked.

“It’s a possibility.”

Lily knew far too well it was a possibility. Too often when a Muggle has a magical child, and that child has bouts of “*accidental magic*”, they don’t know what is happening and the Muggle parents react in fear. Unfortunately, sometimes they direct their fear towards their magical child. Far too many Muggle-borns had faced abuse from their ignorant parents. The fearful parents foolishly believed that they could have “*forced*” the “*unnaturalness*” out of their children.

Lily had been lucky. Everyone in her family, save for her dreadful sister, had accepted her and her magical ability. From what she knew of the Grangers, Hermione was also lucky.

But with this boy, one thing was clear; he had suffered some form of neglect. Whether it was intentional because he was a wizard in a Muggle family or for some other unknown reasons, this boy had been abused.

“Good afternoon ladies.” Lily’s attention was drawn away from the boy by Dumbledore’s voice. The headmaster entered the hospital wing, leading in a number of the teaching staff. “It seems my ‘idea’ on what happened to our guests has just been proven. As hard as it may be to believe…”

“They have come from an alternate reality,” Lily interrupted. “Or a parallel universe.”

“Ah, that is why you have always been one of my favorite students Lily,” Dumbledore said with a twinkle in his eyes. “The residue is from a temporal paradox, but no records have ever reported such a large amount of it. But, tell me Lily, how did you come to this conclusion?”

Lily spent the next several minutes filling in the headmaster and her fellow professors on their discoveries.

“And you do not know the identity of the young man whose hand you are holding?” Dumbledore asked, as he gestured towards Lily. She was taken back as she saw that she was still cradling the boy’s right hand and was gently moving her thumb across the scarred words, as if she were trying to smooth them out. She also noticed that her other hand was caressing his check. It may have seemed odd to see such an intimate gesture, but, to Lily, it felt natural, like she needed to ease his pain.

“No, we don’t,” Lily said and somewhat hesitantly stepped away from the boy. “What little we have been able to discern is that he is most likely a Muggle-born and that he was abused.”

“Would it be safe to assume that his counterpart from this timeline succumbed to the abuse and perished?” Albus asked with a heavy heart.

“It’s possible,” Lily responded. “More than likely, his counterpart died sometime before he got his Hogwarts letter.”

“That is unfortunate. For I believe we should contact these children’s families; Lily would you please go to the Grangers.” Turning to address the faculty members who had accompanied him into the Hospital Ward, Dumbledore continued, “Minerva, if you would go and

get the Weasleys, and Professor Vector, please go to Mr. Lovegood. Allow me a quarter of an hour to prepare the necessary Portkeys."

"Headmaster," Snape interrupted. "If it is true that the boy has come back... it may cause the Dark Lord..." the potions master unconsciously rubbed the stump of what used to be his left arm, "to pause in his activities."

"Indeed," the ancient wizard replied. "Voldemort may halt his operations if he finds out that The-Boy-Who-Lived has returned."

None of the adults noticed a shadowy figure lurking in the shadows near the doorway. Nor did they notice that same figure slink off toward the dungeons.

"But, he may hasten his plans as well," Dumbledore continued. "For now, let us keep Mr. Longbottom's return a secret."

The Portkey dropped Lily in an alleyway a few blocks away from the Granger residence, dressed in her best Muggle clothes. Although they were some 20 years out of date, she took pride in the fact she could still blend in with Muggles better than 98 of wizarding folk (No matter how many times she told James "don't mix plaids with stripes," the man just didn't seem to get it).

Briskly walking up to the house, Lily knocked on the front door. It opened slowly, and a tiny, round face with bushy wild hair poked out from behind the door.

"Aunt Wiwwy!" the tot exclaimed.

"Hello, Em!" Lily returned the greeting with equal enthusiasm. She bent over to whisper to the little girl. "Emilia, you know you aren't allowed to open the door without Mummy or Daddy's permission. I could have been a stranger."

"But you're not a stwanger, you're Aunt Wiwwy," Emilia stated flatly.

“Emilia Granger!” a disembodied voice chastised the girl somewhere from the foyer. “You’re not allowed to open the door without Daddy’s or my permission.”

“I know!” Emilia said in frustration and pointed to Lily. “That’s what Aunt Wiwwy just told me.”

The door opened further to reveal Paullina Granger.

“Lily!” She exclaimed with almost as much enthusiasm as her daughter’s greeting. “We didn’t expect to see you until the Holidays.”

“Actually, something’s come up at the school, and I need to speak to you and Edward,” Lily said wringing her hands.

“There hasn’t been another...” Paullina paused and became very pale, “another death?”

“Actually...”

Explaining magic to a Muggle was never an easy thing to do. You would have to use broad and general terms, or, in some cases, very small words and simple drawings. Then they would usually look at you with a blank expression and call you “Barmy” after you were done with the explanation.

But for the short time that Lily knew and taught Hermione, she should have realized her parents would have been cut from a different cloth. Lily spent the next half hour in the Grangers’ kitchen explaining theories, studies, histories, and practical uses for time travel and the effects of temporal paradoxes, over tea.

“We believe that in their timeline,” Lily explained, “for some reason Ron Weasley and your daughter were not killed by the troll. Most likely the teachers stopped it, or the children never entered the bathroom that night. There is another child from their timeline, whose identity is unknown to us, and we believe that his impact on that timeline may have affected what happened to Hermione. It’s possible that he might have done something that stopped your daughter from entering the bathroom.

"If you're ready, we'll use a Portkey to travel to the school," Lily said as she took a length of rope out of her purse. She tapped her wand to the rope and said: "*Portus.*"

And then Lily had to describe Portkeys; how they work, their practical uses, history, etc. Each and every question was clinical and logical. Each question was asked with almost detached interest. As if a small part of Paullina's and Edward's minds would not accept the reality of their first daughter being alive. When the Grangers and Lily arrived in front of the Hospital Ward, reality began to set in.

"Will she recognize us?" Paullina asked frantically. "Will my baby recognize us?"

Edward was pale as a ghost as he held onto his five-year-old daughter as if she was his security blanket. Paullina clutched Lily's hands in hers.

"What if it's not her? What if you're wrong?" Paullina said while tears freely fell from her eyes.

"Paullina," Lily said softly, "I, too, have lost a child to violence. I would not have contacted you if I wasn't positive that the young woman in there was your Hermione. I would never dream of it."

She pulled Paullina into a hug and continued, "That is Hermione Jane Granger in that room, beyond a doubt. She looks like she has aged a few years and had her teeth fixed..."

"See, the braces worked," Edward said on the edge of shock.

"But she is your baby girl," Lily said, and noticed that she was crying as well. Lily wondered for a moment if she was crying out of happiness for her friends, or if it was jealousy?

"Lily, Drs Granger," Remus greeted the group as he walked out of the ward. "The children are awake and Professor Dumbledore is talking with them now."

"What about the other families?" Lily asked.

"The Weasleys and Mr. Lovegood are in there with them."

"All of the Weasleys?"

"Yes," Remus smiled. "The twins are joking that the 'extra' Ginny gives the family another set of twins."

"Excuse me, Mister...?" Edward asked apprehensively.

"Remus Lupin," The man responded. "Please call me 'Remus'."

"Are you sure that that is our daughter in there, Remus?"

"Dr Granger, the young woman in that room has the exact expression of worry and doubt on her face as you do," Remus answered. "I am sure she is your daughter."

"How about you go in there and find out for yourselves?" Lily asked, and hooking her arms into theirs, guided Edward, Paullina, and Emilia into the crowded Hospital Ward.

As if by instinct, The Grangers bolted straight for the second bed on the left, hidden by a privacy curtain,. It took Paullina less then a second to shout out, "My Baby" and lunge herself out of sight and onto her daughter.

A sea of red-haired people, most of who were packed tight around Ron's bed, blocked the view of the right side of the Ward. Molly Weasley's voice could be heard sobbing while the male Weasleys were all practically shouting something about a pick-up game of Quidditch.

Lily noticed that the Ginny from the proper timeline, her timeline, was looking at her counterpart with trepidation. Her duplicate, who was now wearing a Hospital gown, was staring back at her with an equal amount of apprehension. The other timeline's Ginny was also half hiding behind Neville Longbottom, who seemed to be shielding the red-haired witch from any harm. An odd thing, seeing as Lily remembered Longbottom being an arrogant snob who often ridiculed Ginny because of her social standing.

In front of the first bed on the right were the Lovegoods, two Lunas and their father, talking about the possible effects of time travel on *Crumple-Horned Snorkacks*. *Due to her hospital gown, it was easy to spot the Luna who came from the alternate timeline.*

Lily's eyes were drawn to the far end of the Ward to Dumbledore. He was obviously speaking to the unknown young man, whom she could not see.

Just as Lily turned to head out of the ward, she heard a gasp. Lily turned to meet the gaze of the Ginny from the other timeline. The girl was white as a sheet and her eyes were bulging. Ginny was shaking Neville's arm to get his attention. Longbottom turned and followed her gaze to Lily and he went pale as well.

"Welcome to our world," Lily greeted them. The two teens seemed to be in shock, for they didn't respond. Lily shrugged her shoulders and walked out of the ward.

Just outside of the doors Lily found her husband, and her two children, along with Remus Lupin, Sirius, and his daughter Michelle, waiting for her.

"Did they have to put an Engorgement Charm on the ward so they could fit all of the Weasley's in there?" Sirius joked with a smile.

"No, somebody should have, though," Lily said returning the smile. "It's awfully crowded in there."

"Wait, aren't you a 'Charms Mistress' or something?" James playfully chided his wife.

"Shut it, you."

"Mum, have they found out who the sixth kid is yet?" Alice asked.

"I believe that the Headmaster is speaking with him now."

Lily felt a hand rest on her shoulder; she turned to see the unexpectedly sad face of Albus Dumbledore.

“Albus, are you all right?” Lily asked.

“As well as could be expected,” Albus said, looking the oldest Lily had ever seen him. “It is true that I discovered the identity of the mystery boy.”

“What did he say his name is?” Remus asked.

“He did not have to tell me,” Dumbledore said. “I recognized him.”

“Wait, you said earlier that you didn’t recognize him,” James said irritably.

“After he woke up, he reverted to his true form,” Dumbledore explained. “He is a Metamorphmagus.”

“My Great-Uncle Albert was a Metamorphmagus,” James said casually, and Albus seemed to sadden even more. “I understand that such abilities are extremely rare.”

“Are they rarer than an animagus?” Lily asked and poked James in the ribs playfully. James shot his wife a reproachful look.

“Would you like me to fetch his family?” Sirius asked.

“I don’t think so,” Lily said as she crossed her arms. “Those bastards abused the poor boy.”

If the group’s attention had not been on Dumbledore, they would have seen a figure leave the hospital ward and walk up to them.

“James, Lily,” Dumbledore said as he put his other hand on James’ shoulder. “The two timelines did not diverge on Halloween in 1991 as we first believed.”

“Then when did they, Albus?” Lily asked, but a quiet voice in the back of her mind was repeating a familiar name.

“It is true that time-lines did diverge on a Halloween, but...” the old man drew a sad breath “the difference occurred ten years earlier, sixteen years ago today.”

“What?” James asked.

“Hey!” Remmy interrupted and pointed behind his parents. “You look just like my dad!”

Lily spun around and looked at the young man standing just a few feet away. Her gaze fell past his untidy mop of black hair, past his lightning-bolt shaped scar and landed on his eyes. She was amazed that his eyes that held so much pain and loneliness; just like her eyes did whenever she thought of Halloween.

Her eyes.

“Oh, my God!” Lily blurted out as the young man began to shake violently.

“Harry?” James asked, while tears formed in his eyes.

The boy, no, she corrected herself, *Harry*, then fell harshly to his knees and wretched on the floor. Before his green eyes rolled up into his head, Lily saw something akin to terror and fear in them. Harry then turned very pale and fell to the floor unconscious.

“*Harry...b-ba- baby*,” her voice trembled more than her hands were, “*Harry, wake up...*”

TBC

Author's Notes: Thank you for reading my fic. I would like to thank my beta sasqch.

Lily Potter and the Worst Holiday

Chapter Two

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WARNING: Harsh Language and adult themes

Chapter Two Summary: Lily and the others learn how the six visitors arrived and how her son survived in the other timeline.

Lily sat in Dumbledore's office staring daggers at that pretentious *little girl*. How dare she tell Lily that she couldn't see her own baby!

It made her blood boil; just thinking of what that *little girl* did when Lily's baby collapsed to the floor outside the Hospital Ward. That Granger *girl* had to audacity to stand between Lily and her baby, saying that Lily was doing "*more harm than good*."

That Granger *girl* was even hesitant to let Poppy give Harry a calming draught. The *little girl* demanded to run her own Diagnostic Charm on the draught to see if it was "*safe*."

To make matters worst, a normal dosage of the draught did nothing to calm Harry. Lily's poor boy had to be given triple the dosage before he was able to fall asleep.

"Lily, please drink your tea," Minerva said soothingly. "It will help calm your nerves."

"I don't need to calm down!" Lily replied harshly, without taking her eyes off of that *little girl*. The bushy haired witch sat in front of Dumbledore's desk, flanked by Ron, Neville, and Ginny. *That Granger girl* had decided that "their" Luna should stay by Harry's side in the Hospital Ward and contact her if anything should happen. "What I need is see my son."

What infuriated Lily even more was that the *little girl* would not look up. The rest of the children from the other time-line were looking around the Headmaster's Office with obvious curiosity. But *that Granger girl* refused to look up. She stared intently at the floor in front of her feet while ignoring everyone else in the room.

The tension in the office was palpable. Lily could feel James pacing back and forth behind her. Alice and Remmy stood nervously on either side of their mother, desperately wishing that they could comfort their parents but not knowing how to do it. Remus and Sirius stood patiently near the door, waiting for answers. The entire Weasley clan filled up the majority of the office, anxiously waiting to be reacquainted to their brother and son, Ron, and to get to know their spare daughter and sister, Ginny. Edward and Paullina Granger sat close to Lily; it was obvious that they just wanted to hold their eighteen year old daughter. Dumbledore had decided that Michelle Black and Emilia Granger were too young to be part of these proceedings, so Michelle had offered to baby-sit the little girl.

"Lemon Drops?" Dumbledore asked as he offered a tin of sweets to the people that filled his office. The ancient wizard sat behind his desk with Severus and Minerva on each side.

'Damn that insufferable man!' Lily thought irritably, *'just sitting there with his never-ending patience. Why doesn't he just end this absurd "meeting" so I can go to my baby?'*

She had to go to Harry, to find out why he had looked at her with such fear and terror. Why did that *little girl* say that Lily was doing more harm than good? Did Lily's counterpart, the Lily from the other timeline do something wrong? Was she the one who neglected her baby? Abused him?

"I was quite intrigued by your costumes," Dumbledore said cheerfully. "Which one of you suggested that you should pick up such a quaint Muggle tradition?"

"It was Harry and Hermione's idea," Ron said innocently. Lily was taken back at the look Hermione gave the lanky red-haired wizard, but then, so was Ron. The tall boy shrunk into his chair at Hermione's glare.

“Wonderful, I take it that you were supposed to be Merlin, Mr. Weasley?” Dumbledore asked, ignoring Hermione’s icy gaze. Ron nodded weakly, still trying to escape Hermione’s eyes. “And Ms. Lovegood was a Crumple-Horned Snorkack, if I’m not mistaken. Mr. Longbottom, that was quite a ‘Beaumont Marjoribanks’ costume. As to the other three costumes, I am at a loss for what they represent.”

“I was dressed as ‘Moaning Myrtle,’” Ginny informed the Headmaster.

“Harry was ‘Gilderoy Lockart’ and Hermione was a ‘House-elf,’” Neville added.

“Yeah, Harry had such a hard time with that git Lockhart when he was a professor,” Ron said with a chuckle. “Harry had a blast imitating him...OW!”

Ron had cried out in pain because Hermione had stomped on his large feet.

“What did you do that for?” Ron asked as he rubbed his foot. Hermione did not respond but continued to glare at him. “Hermione, I’m not Harry; you’re gonna have to use words with me.”

“Shut up,” Hermione said as if she were talking to a small child. “This could be a trap. And don’t look any of them in the eye, especially Dumbledore or Snape.”

“What makes you think this is a trap?” Lupin asked from somewhere behind Lilly; she wasn’t certain as to Remus’ location because she continued to stare at that *pretentious little girl*. “And who do you think is laying this trap?”

“Voldemort,” Hermione said with barely a stutter. Lily looked around and noticed that the only other people in the room who did not shake at Voldemort’s name were James, Remus, Sirius, Albus, and herself. Even the other three children from the alternate time shuddered in fear.

“And what makes you think that the Dark Lord would bother setting a trap for a few teenagers?” Snape asked with a sneer.

“He’s done it before,” Hermione answered as she returned her eyes to the floor. The other three children followed her example and stared at the ground. “Mind you it’s never been this elaborate before,” Hermione muttered.

“And what, Ms. Granger, what can I do to prove to you, and your friends, that this is not a trap?” asked Dumbledore as he steepled his fingers.

Hermione seemed to consider her options for a moment.

“Tell me the prophesy,” the young witch demanded. “You can make the rest leave if you like, but tell me the prophesy Trelawney made.”

“Would I be correct in saying that the contents of that prophesy are known to only a few people in your timeline?” Dumbledore asked.

“Only the six of us and our Dumbledore,” Hermione responded.

“In this reality, the prophesy is common knowledge,” Dumbledore stated.

“The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches...” Lily recited in a monotone voice, “born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not...” Hermione had stopped staring at the floor and looked to Lily in wide-eyed amazement, “and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives... the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies...”

“About two and a half years ago, our Mr. Longbottom was murdered at the end of the Tri-Wizard Tournament,” Dumbledore said to the children. “At that time, all three people mentioned to that prophesy, Lord Voldemort, the baby Harry, and Mr. Longbottom, were believed to be dead. So the Ministry saw fit to divulge the entire contents of the prophesy.”

“I was... I mean he was... um, the other Neville was a Champion?” Neville asked perplexed.

“Yes, Mr. Longbottom, but at this point, I must ask that you tell us how the six of you arrived in this time,” Dumbledore stated.

Ron, Neville, and Ginny all turned to Hermione, obviously expecting her to inform everyone.

“We were all in Hogsmeade when Harry felt Voldemort’s presence,” Hermione began. Lily was perplexed as to how her baby could detect the Dark Lord’s presence and was about to interrupt to ask when the *little girl* continued her tale. “Harry ordered some members of the DA, that is, The Defense Association, it’s a club where Harry tutors us in Defense Against the Dark Arts.”

“Harry is so good at Defense that he tutors other students?” James blurted in an astonished and yet somewhat proud tone.

“Well, you’d be good at it too if four out of your first five DADA professors tried to kill you,” Ron said with a chuckle.

Lily gasped aloud along with most of the people in the room at Ron’s off-hand comment. It shocked Lily to think that, along with Voldemort, four other full grown wizards had tried to murder her baby.

“Well, actually,” Ron continued, oblivious to the shocked stares from the other people in the room, “all five of them tried to kill him. I wasn’t counting Lupin, seeing how it was a full moon and...”

Without even looking at Ron, Hermione raised her foot and stomped roughly on Ron’s foot again. The red-haired wizard cried out in pain.

Remus, Sirius, James, and Lily shared a concerned look. Clearly, in the timeline these children come from, it was common knowledge that Remus is a werewolf. And Ron nearly blurted it out, thinking that it was common knowledge here as well. Luckily, the Granger girl realized that Ron was about to make a grievous error and stopped him.

“As I was saying,” Hermione said ignoring Ron, “Harry ordered some of the DA to escort the other students back to the castle. Before the majority of the students could escape however, Hogsmeade was

swarming with Death Eaters. Scores of Death Eaters came from every direction, and three Voldemort, as well.

“The Death Eaters weren’t too much of a problem, but we were getting roughed up by the three Voldemort. Harry had taken several more curses than the rest of us. It was then that I noticed the Time Turners hanging around each one of the Voldemort’s necks, seeing how I used one similar to it in my third year,” Hermione continued her explanation. “I... signaled to Harry what was going on, and we came up with a plan.”

“You mean:” Ron interrupted as he continued to rub his foot, “you two shared a look and, like always, he understood what you were thinking.”

Hermione gave Ron an icy glare that clearly stated “Shut Up.”

“We figured that Harry should distract Voldemort and I would summon the Time Turners and hopefully set things right.” Hermione began again. “Harry launched a rapid series of Blasting Hexes at the feet of the three Voldemort. While Voldemort was distracted, I Summoned the Turners. Unfortunately, one of the Voldemort launched his own Blasting Hex at the Turners destroying them.

“The six of us were all covered in the Turners’ sand, and the ground began to tremble. We were surrounded by a dust storm of some kind that came out of nowhere. I think that the destruction of the Time Turners initiated a paradox which caused the storm. I mean, all three Time Turners were the same item, just backed up in time. If the Turner was destroyed before being used to go back in a loop, how could the other Time Turners have existed to be destroyed. But since the Time Turner was duplicated through its time manipulation magic, it shouldn’t have been able to be destroyed.” Lily noted that Ron was rubbing his temples at this point; the young wizard had obviously developed a headache from trying to follow Hermione’s theory. “This paradox must have caused the exposed sands from the Time Turners to become unstable. The sand covering us was throwing off powerful magics. It felt like I was being pulled in every direction. I looked around quickly, and noticed that only the six of us and the three Voldemort were still in the Hogsmeade street. It was at that point

that I saw the three Voldemorts get caught up in the storm. Each one's body was utterly destroyed by the magic; their bodies were literally torn apart. I think that we were protected from the storm that killed the Voldemorts by the sand covering our bodies. That's when everything went black," Hermione said. "The next thing I remember is waking up here, and you, Professor Dumbledore, was explaining that most of our counterparts were dead here."

"The initial examination revealed that you were all suffering from severe magical exhaustion as well as some minor injuries," explained Dumbledore. "I believe that the sands from the ruined Turners must have used your magical cores. They drained your magical reserve but managed to transport you to this timeline, rather than erasing the six of you from existence."

"Now that is out of the way, I must ask," Dumbledore added, "what do you think happened in your timeline that made it so different from ours?"

The four children shared a look, and the *little Granger girl* turned and faced Lily for the first time since entering the office. Lily was taken back at the utter sadness in the girl's eyes.

"Maybe it would be best if I were to start from the beginning," Dumbledore said after no one spoke for a minute, "from when our two realities appear to divert."

"Sixteen years ago, the Potters and the Longbottoms went into hiding. They were protected under the Fidelius Charm; do you happen to know of this charm?"

"Yes, sir; the same thing happened in our time," Hermione answered, turning away from Lily.

"Well, Amelia Bones was the Longbottoms' Secret-Keeper and Sirius was to be the Potters' Secret-Keeper," Dumbledore continued. "But, James and Sirius thought that the latter would be too obvious of a choice, and so the Potters decided to have Peter Pettigrew act as the Secret-Keeper."

"The same choice was made in our time as well," Hermione added.

“This next part is where our two times will differ, I believe,” Dumbledore said. “On Halloween, Peter went to the Potters and lied to both Lily and James. He told them that I wanted to speak to them and that he would look after Harry. Shortly before Lily and James arrived at my office, Remus had stopped by to report the disturbing news that Madame Bones had been kidnapped. I was about to leave to check on the Longbottoms, when Lily and James entered this office. I instantly knew that Peter’s message was a trick to get Harry’s parents away so that Voldemort would face no resistance. James, Lily, Remus, and I went to Godric’s Hollow. By chance, at the same time Sirius had gone to check on Peter. When he could not find Peter, Sirius knew something was wrong and he decided to go to Godric’s Hollow as well. We met up with Sirius at the cottage, but, sadly, we arrived too late.

“Lord Voldemort had murdered young Harry just a few moments before we were able to stop him,” Dumbledore looked at the Potters with unmasked sorrow. “But we could not mourn for the baby, because our Mr. Longbottom was also referenced in the prophesy, and therefore, he, too, was in mortal peril. Luckily, Madame Bones, the Longbottoms’ Secret-Keeper, had told the five of us where Frank, Alice, and young Neville were hiding. So Sirius, Remus, James....” Dumbledore paused for a mere second and glanced quickly, almost imperceptibly, at Lily, before continuing: “...and I traveled to the Longbottom home.”

Dumbledore turned his attention to Longbottom.

“I am very sorry to say, Mr. Longbottom, we arrived too late,” Dumbledore said mournfully. “Voldemort had already murdered your parents.”

“Oh, okay,” Neville said simply and without grief. When he noticed the looks of disbelief on the people surrounding him, Neville continued, “In our time, my parents had been tortured by the Lestranges and Crouch. They lost their minds while I was still an infant. They’ve been catatonic ever since. The way I see it, it is more of a mercy for them to die quickly instead of suffering so much pain.”

“That is a bizarre coincidence,” McGonagall stated. “The exact same incident happened in our timeline, but to an Auror named Kingsley Shacklebolt and his wife.”

“When we had reached young Neville’s nursery, Voldemort was about to cast the Killing Curse on our Mr. Longbottom,” said Dumbledore, and he paused for a moment before continuing. “I reacted, purely on instinct, and hit Voldemort with my own Killing Curse before Voldemort could finish his incantation.”

Neville, Ron, and Ginny were obviously rapt with attention, but Lily noticed that Hermione had a look of disbelief on her face. The young witch stared incredulously at the Headmaster.

“Because Lord Voldemort died while trying to kill our Mr. Longbottom, the young man was heralded as a hero by the public; he was referred to as ‘The-Boy-Who-Lived’ by the press,” Dumbledore stated.

Lily always despised that moniker. Every time she heard Longbottom called that, she felt as if they were calling her baby “The-Boy-Who-Died.”

“You counterpart, Mr. Longbottom, reveled in the celebrity,” Dumbledore said. “I can tell, from the short amount of time that I have known you, that you are a kind and brave young man. Our Mr. Longbottom was somewhat... less courteous and giving.”

“He was a pompous git, is what he was,” George offered.

“Yeah, he strutted around the castle like he was king or something,” Fred finished.

“Oh, um, sorry about that,” Neville said, feeling the need to apologize for his counterpart’s actions.

“No need for an apology,” Dumbledore said with a small smirk. His smile quickly faded as he turned to Ron and the Granger girl. Lily noticed that the girl wasn’t paying as much attention as the other three children. Her brow was knotted as if she was concentrating on something. “In their first year, our Ron and Hermione were murdered by a troll in one of the girls’ lavatories.”

“Hold on a tic,” Ron interrupted. “In our time, I didn’t even think about Hermione that day, not without Harry mentioning her. It was Harry who decided that we needed to go look for Hermione when we heard about the troll. What happened here?”

“That would’ve been my fault,” Percy spoke up. “As I was leading the first years back to the dormitories that night, I noticed we were one short. I found out that you... I mean the other Ron, had said something to make her cry. I demanded that we go search for her because the teachers were occupied with finding the troll.

“I also believed that if we were to ‘rescue’ the girl, that Gryffindor would receive awards and merits,” Percy began to sob almost hysterically. “I made you go into the girls’ bathroom to fetch Hermione. That’s when I heard the troll... I tried to stop it, but it just knocked me into a wall. When I woke up a few minutes later, I saw it coming out of the loo... and its club was covered in... it was covered in...” Percy fell to his knees next to Ron. “I’m so sorry I couldn’t protect you... I’m sorry I got you killed...”

Ron leaned towards his grieving brother and patted him on the back of his head.

“It’s alright,” Ron said simply and sat back into his chair.

As the rest of the Weasley family from the proper timeline surrounded Percy in a comforting hug, the alternate Ginny roughly smacked Ron in the back of the head and growled, “Teaspoon!”

Before anyone could ask Ginny about her bizarre reference, Dumbledore continued.

“In what was our Mr. Longbottom’s fourth year, we hosted the Tri-Wizard Challenge.” Lily was infuriated with Dumbledore, why did he insist on wasting time telling these children the history of this timeline? Her baby was in the hospital ward unconscious, in shock at the mere sight of his own mother. Lily folded her arms in front of her chest and turned away from the Headmaster. She saw that the Ginny from the other timeline was watching her counterpart menacingly.

“Sorry, Professor,” Ron interrupted again, “But I gotta know; what happened with Quirrell and the Philosopher’s Stone?”

“You know about that?” Dumbledore asked with a hint of amazement. “We have kept that a secret in this timeline. How did you ever hear about it?”

“Well, Harry, Hermione, and me stopped him,” Ron said with a proud smile.

“What?” James blurted out. “What do you mean? You three would have only been in first year!”

“Yeah, I beat McGonagall’s chessboard. Hermione bested Snape’s logic puzzle,” Ron explained. “And Harry faced Quirrell, who had You-Know-Who sticking out of the back of his head.”

“Harry faced Voldemort when he was only eleven?” Lily asked completely shocked.

“Oh, Harry faced-off with You-Know-Who loads of times,” Ron replied. Hermione was drawn out of her thoughts and held her hands up to Ron, as if to stop him, but the red-haired boy just continued. “In our first year, Harry confronted him in front of the Mirror of Erised, oh yeah; he ran into him in the Forbidden Forest before that, too. In second year, it was a shadow of You-Know-Who’s memory. And then, Harry actually dueled with Ol’ Snake Face after he was resurrected in our fourth year.” Lily gasped loudly and began to cry at the horrors her son must have faced. “And Harry got possessed by him in our fifth...”

“*Ron. Shut. Up!*” Hermione commanded. Ron finally noticed the look of fright on James and Lily’s faces. “And the obvious answer your question is that Quirrell and Voldemort couldn’t have gotten the Stone because they would have wanted to use it. Dumbledore bewitched the Mirror so it wouldn’t give the stone to anyone who wanted to use it. In our history, Dumbledore showed up shortly after Harry and Quirrell began fighting.”

Lily paled as an image of Harry at a mere eleven years-old facing off with a full grown wizard entered her mind.

"That is quite astute, Ms. Granger," Dumbledore complimented the young witch. "I arrived in the Mirror chamber and discovered Quirrell standing there pleading with his master for one more chance. When I made my presence known, Lord Voldemort fled Quirrell's body, causing him a slow and painful death. And since Mr. Weasley said that Harry dueled with The Dark Lord in his fourth year, it is safe to assume that Harry was the Tri-Wizard Champion, and not Mr. Longbottom?"

"But why was I the champion?" Neville asked. "I mean, Harry's the Boy-Who-Lived."

"Ah, but as our Mr. Longbottom was the 'Boy-Who-Lived' in this world," Dumbledore answered, "he was targeted by Voldemort and was kid-"

"Why are you here?" Ginny's voice cut off the Headmaster. Lily turned and saw the red-haired witch from the other timeline stand up shakily, staring at her counterpart. "If Harry wasn't here to save this world's Ron and Hermione, and they died because of it, why are you here?"

"I... I don't know what you are talking about," the proper Ginny responded.

"Did you say something differently than I did?" the other Ginny demanded as tears welled up in her eyes. "Did you say something to him that I didn't, that made him like you?"

"Gin, it's okay." Ron said as he laid a comforting hand on his sister's arm.

"IF HARRY WASN'T HERE TO SAVE YOU," the other Ginny shouted as she tore her arm away from Ron's touch, **"WHY ARE YOU STILL ALIVE?"**

Ron and Neville stood protectively around the other Ginny as Mr. Weasley shielded the proper Ginny and demanded: "What's going on?"

The other Ginny collapsed into Neville's arms, Ron rubbed the girl's back, and Hermione held Ginny's hand.

"Um... Ginny," Ron asked looking at the proper Ginny, "where's the diary? Where's Riddle's diary?"

Ginny shot a worried look at her father then at Dumbledore. The Headmaster opened a drawer in his desk and removed a small red journal.

"Do you mean this, Mr. Weasley?" Dumbledore asked holding up the book. The other Ginny whimpered and hid behind Neville, who seemed to try and shield the girl from the book with his body.

"When Ms. Weasley started her first year, she discovered this book in her belongings," Dumbledore said, as he placed the book back in one of the drawers. The four children from the other timeline visibly relaxed as the book was put away.

"Albus, what is that book?" Arthur asked.

"It is a journal of a student who attended Hogwarts some time ago," Dumbledore explained. "The journal contains a magical copy of his memories, his shadow if you will."

"Is it dangerous?" Remus asked.

"Very much so," Dumbledore stated. "The student's name was Tom Marvolo Riddle."

"Voldemort," James said in a shocked tone.

"Yes," Dumbledore continued. "A few weeks after our Ms. Weasley started; she approached me and gave me this journal. She stated, if I remember correctly, that her father had warned her about objects that could think for themselves."

"I'm so stupid," the other time's Ginny buried her face into Neville's chest and cried.

"It's alright, Ginny," Neville comforted the red-haired witch as he held her to him. "I reckon that this Ginny was a bit more cautious 'cuz her brother had died, is all."

"I assume that the Chamber was re-opened in your timeline?" Dumbledore asked. Neville and Ron simple nodded their heads. "Was anyone harmed?"

"A few students were petrified, including Hermione," Ron explained. "And You-Know-Who tired to... he almost..."

It was obvious that Ron was having difficulty finishing his statement.

"He attempted to drain your sister's life-force," Dumbledore concluded. Ron nodded again. "And you mentioned that Harry confronted Voldemort's shadow, so it would be safe to assume that it was Harry who saved Ms. Weasley's life?"

Ron nodded his head once more.

"It would seem, then, that our two worlds are vastly different," Dumbledore stated.

"You don't know the half of it," Ron muttered. Lily could have sworn that Ron looked at his parents with a tear in his eye.

Albus took a sip of his tea before continuing.

"So, I believe that we can say that Harry is the main reason how and why our two timelines are different. Could one of you please tell me what happened to your Harry?"

Lily leaned forward in her chair, anxious to find out what had happened. What Lily truly wanted to know is why her alternate self, the Lily from the other timeline, had abused and neglected her son.

Ron looked nervously between James, Lily, and Sirius for a moment before turning towards the *little Granger girl*.

Hermione stopped worrying her lip and looked into Albus' blue eyes.

“Before I answer, Professor, there are a few things I would like to clear up about what happen in this timeline sixteen years ago.”

“No! You can ask you silly questions later!” Lily demanded. “Tell me what happened to my son!”

“You said that you cast the Killing Curse at Voldemort, correct Professor?” the *little girl* asked Dumbledore, completely ignoring Lily.

“Yes, I was forced to,” Albus responded.

“Why?”

“Why? Because someone’s life was in jeopardy,” answered Dumbledore.

“But you knew that you wouldn’t be able to kill him,” the *little girl* continued. “You were the only one who knew the entire prophesy, and you knew that only Harry or Neville would be able to kill Voldemort. Because of this knowledge, you would’ve tried to restrain him or stun him.”

Lily didn’t like where the little girl’s questions were leading, neither did James. She could feel her husband begin to tense up behind her. Lily noticed that she was unconsciously gripping the arms of the chair that she sat in so hard that her knuckles were white.

“Like I said, I acted impulsively,” the Headmaster stated. “A person’s life was at stake...”

“But when our Harry dueled with Voldemort in our fifth year, Voldemort launched several Killing Curses at Harry,” Hermione countered. “Our Dumbledore tried to restrain Voldemort, not kill him, because he knew it would be futile-”

“Listen, just drop it!” James ordered irritably. The *little Granger girl* could tell that this inquiry was over. Lily took a calming breath as the *little girl* looked at James and then directly into Lily’s eyes. After a moment, the Granger girl turned back to Dumbledore.

"My next question is when Voldemort attacked this world's Neville," the *little girl* continued, "did he hit Neville with the Killing Curse?"

"What kind of asinine question is that?" Snape said scornfully. Paullina and Edward stood up and began to berate Snape for insulting their daughter, but Snape ignored them much like Hermione ignored Lily. "The Headmaster clearly stated that the Longbottom brat wasn't killed until his fourth year. If he had been hit with the Killing Curse when he was a child, he would have died, you silly girl."

"Oi, greasy-git," Ron called out from his chair. "I take it that You-Know-Who found out that you were a spy. Is that why you got it cut off," Ron said indicating Snape's left arm, "to get rid of the Dark Mark?"

"What of it, you insolent whelp?" Snape asked defensively.

"I just reckon it must be difficult to make all those complicated potions with just one hand."

"I can do everything now that I could before," Snape hissed defiantly.

"Is that right?" Ron asked as he casually. "Clap."

Snape's face paled and his eyes bulged in anger.

"How dare you—" the Potions Master began.

"Climb a ladder," Ron added.

"Ronald!" Molly shouted. "Show some respect!"

"This git doesn't deserve respect," Ron said. "Not after how he taught Harry Occlumency."

"You little snot!" Snape snarled as he took a step towards Ron.

"Severus," Dumbledore said as he held his hand out to Snape. "Please calm down."

Snape grudgingly stood down. The Headmaster turned his attention back to the Granger girl.

“No, the Dark Lord was stopped before he was able to finish the incantation for the Killing Curse.”

“So your Neville wasn’t ‘*marked*’ then,” Hermione concluded.

After a moment of silence where Albus was deep in thought, he stated, “I never took that part of the prophesy to be literal.” Dumbledore stroked his long silver beard before continuing. “So young Harry was marked... are you saying that your Harry survived the Killing Curse? How is that possible?”

Lily was taken back when all four children turned in unison and looked straight at her in response to Albus’ question.

“Did your time’s Lily do something to protect young Harry?” the Headmaster asked noticing the children’s gaze.

“Wormtail didn’t trick the Potters,” Hermione began, turning her sad eyes to the floor again. “He just scurried to Voldemort and told him where Godric’s Hollow was.”

“Pardon me,” Minerva interrupted, “who is Wormtail?”

“It was Peter’s nickname in school,” Remus informed the group.

“No one knows what really happened that night,” Hermione continued. “Harry only recalls bits and pieces of it when Dementors attack him.”

“Voldemort broke in, James told Lily to take Harry and run. But for some reason Lily couldn’t escape,” Hermione continued. “Maybe Voldemort set up anti apparition wards, I don’t know. But Voldemort killed James after Lily had run up to the nursery with Harry.”

Lily heard Remmy and Alice groan sadly at the mention of their father being murdered.

“While Voldemort headed to the nursery, Lily did something, some sort of blood ritual, before she, too, was murdered.”

Lily gasped. She remembered finding an ancient book in the Potter family library before Harry was born. In the crumpling pages, she

discovered a ritual in which one person's life-force could be used to protect another's. For months after Harry's murder, Lily wondered what would have happened if she sacrificed herself for her son, as the ritual described.

Her guilt ridden mind had often fantasized about what would have happened if she would have used that ritual on Harry. Lily had imagined herself biting down on her own thumb so hard that she would've drawn blood. She would then use her bloody thumb to hastily draw a simple rune on her baby's forehead, a rune that look something like a cross between an "S" and a lightning bolt.

A lightning bolt.

"It worked," Lily sobbed recalling the odd scar on Harry's forehead. She grabbed James' hand and looked into his eyes. "James, it worked, I saved him."

"But at what cost?" Dumbledore asked as he looked at Remmy and Alice.

"Mum and Dad are dead?" Remmy asked.

"In our world, yes," Hermione answered.

"Oh, Merlin," Sirius moaned somewhere behind Lily. "What did I do to him?"

"What do you mean?" Ron asked, looking perplexed.

"Harry was abused," Sirius replied while he started to cry. "I was to be his guardian if Lily and James died. That means I hurt Harry."

"Oh, no, you were chucked into Azkaban a few days latter," Ron stated flatly. "You went after Wormtail but the rat killed a load of Muggles and framed you, instead."

"But... but," Sirius stammered, "I wouldn't have gone after Peter if I had to take care of Harry."

After a moment, Hermione explained, “No one knew that you and Peter switched Secret Keeper duties. Everyone thought that you were the spy, not Peter. So Dumbledore told Hagrid to bring Harry back to him, and not to let anyone else take him.”

“But, who hurt my baby?” Lily said softly.

Hermione turned her eyes back to the floor and the other three children were looking anywhere but at Lily.

“Please tell me,” Lily implored.

Before Hermione continued, she wiped a tear away from her eye.

“Dumbledore knew that Voldemort wasn’t dead, and that Harry could’ve still been in danger from him or any one of his followers. But your protection was more powerful than anything Dumbledore had seen. He believed that it was in Harry’s best interest that he continue that same protection, your blood protection.”

“Oh, god no!” Lily exclaimed. Tears began to fall from her eyes as realization dawned upon Lily: *her blood*.

“What do you mean?” James asked Hermione.

“My blood, James,” Lily explained as she took her husband’s hand in hers. “My blood was needed to continue the protection. He was given to the only other blood left in my family; he was given to Petunia.”

James braced himself against Lily’s chair as he felt his knees buckle under him.

Silence filled the room. Lily felt as if she was going to be physically ill. The thought of her baby spending a week, much less years, with that wretched woman made her nauseous. Lily felt the bile creep up her throat at the mere idea of her Harry having to live with those horrible people.

Several years previously, before Alice got her Hogwarts’ letter, James and Lily had attempted to make amends with Petunia and her family. The Potters arrived at the Durselys’, after Lily had used the Muggle

post to give them fair warning. Vernon had looked like he was about to suffer a mild coronary as he “welcomed” them into his house. Petunia refused to speak and had looked like she smelled something repulsive the entire time Lily and her family were there. Their horribly obese son, Dudley, kept trying to intimidate and threaten Lily’s children. The meeting was a complete and utter disaster.

“How bad could it have been?” Minerva asked noticing the shocked expressions on the Potters’ faces.

“Bad,” a red-eyed Ron answered simply.

“It couldn’t have been all that bad,” Snape interjected, patronizingly. Lily shot the bastard a cold look that made him take a step back.

“He never talks about it,” Hermione answered and wiped tears away from her eyes.

“Sometimes, when he has nightmare,” Neville said quietly, “he says things in his sleep...” Both Neville and Ron closed their eyes as if they were having an internal struggle with images that plagued their minds about whatever it was that Harry had said during these nightmares.

Before Lily could press the children for more information, the fireplace in the office erupted in flames and Poppy’s head appeared, floating in the flames.

“Sorry for the interruption Albus, but you wanted to know when-” Poppy began, and then abruptly turned her head to the side to yell at someone behind her. “Would you two PLEASE be quiet!”

“Is there a problem, Poppy?” Dumbledore asked.

“Yes, these two girls... the two Lunas are driving me mad!” Poppy said a bit flustered. “They keep speaking in unison, it’s quite disturbing.”

“I am sorry to hear that,” Albus offered, sounding slightly amused at Poppy’s predicament. “How is your patient?”

"Well, he's awake, which is odd," Poppy answered. "With the amount of calming draught the boy took, he should have been asleep for a day."

"But the truly strange thing is that he was very restless before he woke up," Poppy continued, "like he was having a nightmare."

"Let me speak to our Luna," Hermione demanded.

Poppy looked to Dumbledore for his consent. The Headmaster nodded and Poppy disappeared from the flames. After a moment, Luna's face appeared in the flames.

"Hello, Hermione," Luna said.

"Was it a nightmare?" Hermione asked briskly, without greeting her friend.

Luna blinked once and withdrew her head from the flames. Everyone in the office looked at each other in confusion. Before long however, Luna's face returned.

"Harry says it wasn't a nightmare," Luna said in a dreamy voice. Hermione stood up rapidly. "He says that his Occlumency shields blocked most of it out, but he knows that You-Know-Who is upset about something and is anxious."

"I'll be right there," Hermione stated and began to walk to the door.

Lily stood and proceeded to follow Hermione.

"I'm coming with you." Lily commanded.

Hermione stopped in her tracks and spun to face Lily.

"No you will not!" Hermione barked.

"Excuse me?" Lily asked, shocked by the *little girl's* actions.

"He went into shock the last time he saw you," the *little girl* lectured. "I am going to explain to him what is going on, and when I feel that he can see you..."

“When you feel?” Lily seethed as she took a step towards the *little girl*.
“When you feel I can see him? He is my son! My family!”

“He’s my fiancé!” the *little girl* said, meeting Lily’s glare.

“WHAT?” both Lily and Paullina shouted out!

“You’re too young!” Paullina added.

“Harry’s just a boy!” Lilly stated.

“No he is not!” the *little girl* said, not backing down. “He’s more of a man than anyone I’ve ever met!”

“What makes you think-” Lily began to ask.

“I can tell that Voldemort is still lurking in the shadows in this world! Still in hiding,” the *little Granger girl* interrupted, “pulling strings and controlling events and people from the shadows. In our world, Harry dragged him into the light like a cockroach! Harry proved to the world that Voldemort was alive; but in this world, you let him continue to hide and manipulate people.”

“Never the less,” Lily said vehemently, “He is still too young!”

“In our time, we are at war!” Hermione argued. “Not some chess game where you try to block Voldemort’s next move. We have to live every day like it is the last!”

“Don’t give me that trite saying, *little girl!*” Lily hissed.

“By the time Harry was twelve, he had no less than four attempts on his life!” The *little girl* retorted. “It isn’t a cliché for him... or for the rest of us. You have no idea what we’ve been through!”

Before Lily could argue more, the *little girl* quickly glanced at her parents and rushed out of the office repressing a sob.

Lily was about to run after her when James place his hand on her arm.

“Lily, let her go,” James said, attempting to be soothing.

“WHAT?” Lily nearly screamed at her husband. James of all people should know how she felt. He should be at her side as they rushed to the Hospital Ward to see their baby, not restraining her.

“I believe that we should take a short break, seeing how it is time for supper,” Dumbledore stated before Lily could yell at James for interfering.

“Albus, I-” Lily began to argue with the Headmaster.

“Lily, I cannot begin to understand what you are going through right now,” Dumbledore said, “but please try to be patient.”

“But, Albus...” Lily pleaded but Dumbledore simply gestured to the door.

Lily huffed as the rest of the people filed out of the office. Before James walked out with their children, he turned to Lily.

“Lily, we’ll see him shortly.”

“Fine,” Lily said with barely veiled contempt. Sirius followed James out and Lily fell in step behind Sirius and was the last to leave the office. As she followed Sirius down the corridor, Lily saw something glimmering hanging out of his back pocket. It was James’ Invisibility Cloak. She quickly waved her wand, muttering a Summoning Charm, and the Cloak flew into her hand.

Lily turned and dashed around a corner, whipping the cloak over her. She could hear Sirius curse behind her as he noticed the cloak was missing. No doubt he would tell James, and that the latter would go searching for Lily. But she didn’t care; she needed to be with her Harry.

It took her under a minute or two to run to the Hospital Ward. She saw the two Lunas and their father leaving the ward, talking happily amongst themselves as they headed towards the Great Hall. Lily took a deep breath before entering the Ward.

Her son was still sitting in his bed and that *little girl* was practically in his lap! The *hussy* was talking to her son so softly that Lily had to walk up right next to them to hear what she was saying.

“I don’t think your mum likes me very much right now,” the *little Granger girl* said. Lily barely stopped a snort.

“She just met you,” Harry argued. Lily was amazed at how much Harry sounded like James at that age. Although James was still a bit pretentious when he was seventeen, and there was no hint of that in Harry’s voice.

“She’s upset that I’m having my way with her son,” the *little girl* said with a smile.

‘*Having her way!*’ Lily’s maternal instincts screamed at the implication. That... that *scarlet woman*!

After a moment where neither Harry nor the *little girl* said anything, the latter spoke:

“It’s so odd seeing Fred and George laugh again. I mean it’s been months,” Granger said softly. “And to see Arthur whole and Molly alive...” she trailed off.

Lily was stunned; Molly had died and for some reason, Arthur was not whole. What had happened in the other time line?

“It must be difficult for Ron and Ginny,” Granger said as Harry caressed her hand. “Bill and Charlie had died so horribly... and Percy...”

Granger’s lower lip began to tremble. Harry waited patiently, as if he knew what was about to happen, as if he had been waiting for some time.

“They’re alive, Harry,” Hermione sobbed and fell into Harry’s arms. “They’re alive...”

Harry lovingly stroked the girl’s hair as she cried almost hysterically into his chest.

“Every time I look at my dad, all I see is him screaming under the Cruciatus Curse,” Hermione said and Lily nearly gasped. The pain in her voice was almost too much to endure. “They made me watch, Harry, they made me watch... mum begged for mercy... they just laughed while they... hurt her...”

Harry cupped her face in his hands and placed a gentle kiss on Hermione’s brow as he cried along with her. Lily could tell by the look in their eyes, that this was the first time that Hermione had shared this terrible event with anyone, including Harry.

“They made me watch...” Hermione sobbed.

Lily’s entire body was shaking as she slowly backed away towards the Ward’s entrance. In the world of these six children, Voldemort wasn’t hiding; he and his Death Eaters weren’t acting covertly and doing small, almost undetectable crimes. Trying to control the world from the shadows. They were at war just as Hermione had said; a terrible war that the poor girl witnessed first hand.

Lily backed out of the doors and bumped into James. Lily spun around and threw her arms around her husband.

“Lily, what’s wrong?” James asked as he embraced his invisible wife.

“Oh, God, James, it’s horrible,” Lilly cried. “What those children went through.”

The couple stood outside of the Hospital Ward listening to Hermione crying for a moment.

“Maybe we should leave them alone for a while,” James said pulling the cloak off of Lily. “Besides, Remmy and Alice are a little disturbed at the thought of us dying in the other timeline.”

Lily nodded her head in agreement and James led her toward the Great Hall. She knew that a little hot cocoa helped when Remmy got upset, just as she knew that Alice would want to fly on her broom to alleviate her stress. A mother knows these things.

Then it hit her like a ton of bricks: she didn't know Harry, not like a mother knows her son. She didn't know what types of food he enjoyed or hated. What made him laugh. Lily wasn't there to teach him how to read, or how to ride a bike. She wasn't there to help him shop for his wand or pack his trunk for Hogwarts. She wasn't ever there for him.

Lily began to cry anew as they approached the doors to the Great Hall. James pulled her closer and said, "Don't worry; we'll have plenty of time to spend with him." James always seemed to know what she was thinking.

"I wouldn't get the mudblood's hopes up, if I were you, Potter," a disembodied, cold, feminine voice said from inside the Great Hall. Lily and James froze as a dozen Death Eaters exited the giant doors in front of them.

"The Dark Lord has invited you to join us," the woman, whose voice Lily recognized as Bellatrix Lestrange, said with a cackle. Bellatrix gestured dramatically towards the double doors as two faceless Death Eaters shoved James and Lily into the Great Hall.

Lily gasped aloud at the scene that lay before her. Scores of Death Eaters were scattered about the Great Hall, pointing their wands menacingly at the students. At the head table, in his usual spot, was Dumbledore, unmoving as if frozen in place and in obvious pain. But what distressed Lily more than the world's greatest wizard in distress or the entire student body of Hogwarts under hostage, was seeing her children, Alice and Remmy, kneeling on the floor. Her children were kneeling alongside with the proper timeline's Ginny and Luna who was next to Ron, Neville, Ginny and Luna from the other timeline.

A tall and thin figure slunk from out of the shadows behind Dumbledore. Lily's blood chilled as the figure's cold, red eyes fell upon her emerald green eyes.

"Ah, the murderer has finally arrived," Voldemort hissed.

TBC

Author's Notes: Thank you for reading my fic. I would like to thank my beta sasqch.

Chapter Three

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WARNING: Harsh Language and adult themes and violence

Chapter Three Summary: Voldemort makes his move against Hogwarts and the Boy-Who-Lived, Neville Longbottom.

The tall pale man, if one could call the monster a man, walked in front of the Head Table, weaving in-between the children who were forced to sit on the floor. Voldemort casually cast the Cruciatus Curse on Neville as he passed the young man.

Ron tried to jump up and defend his friend as Neville screamed and writhed on the floor, but his legs were knocked out from under him by a curse from an anonymous Death Eater standing behind the Head Table, his identity obscured by his white mask. Another unknown Death Eater, who appeared to be wearing a silver glove over his right hand, snickered openly at Ron's dilemma.

Voldemort lifted the curse and continued to stroll back and forth in front of the Head Table. The fiend caressed his wand lovingly as he spoke to Lily who was being held by two Death Eaters.

“Two simple words caused me so much pain,” Voldemort said. “Every single moment of every single day for thirteen years was pure agony.”

The Death Eater who had taken James and Lily’s wands walked up to Voldemort and offered them to his master. The Dark Lord took the two wands and placed them in his robes and then resumed his pacing, back and forth in front of the Head Table.

Lily held her breath as the monster walked past her children, Alice and Remmy. The monster seemed to pay them no mind as he

continued his trek back to the children from the other time-line. Voldemort paused in front of Neville and bent over to speak in the young man's ear.

"I will enjoy killing you again, boy," Voldemort said nonchalantly. Neville blanched and Voldemort turned his attention back to Lily.

"After all the pain I had to endure, I believe that it is about time for a little... *retribution*," the monster stated as he leveled his wand at Lily's heart. James futilely tried to pull free from the three Death Eaters who held him fast. It was obvious he wanted to protect Lily from whatever curse the monster was about to cast.

In the blink of an eye, Voldemort swung his wand until it pointed at Lily's thirteen year old son, Remmy.

"CRUCIO!" Voldemort shouted.

Remmy let out a horrifying scream as he thrashed violently on the floor.

"NO!" Lily and James screamed as one, as they fought to break free of their captors. The Death Eaters who held the Potters laughed sadistically as James and Lily thrashed helplessly in their grasps. Remmy continued to convulse for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, Voldemort ended the curse. Remmy's painful cries ceased; however the poor boy continued to twitch on the ground.

"We seem to be short a guest or two," Voldemort said as he counted the children from the other time-line. "Draco, you reported that there were six of them, didn't you?"

"Y-y-yes, master," Draco sniveled, as he bowed to Voldemort. "I believe that the other two are in the Hospital Ward."

"Let us invite them to this wondrous celebration," Voldemort said with a mirthless chuckle. He turned to one of the masked Death Eaters standing behind the Head Table, and commanded, "Bellatrix, take Rodolphus, Rabastan, and your Death Eaters and bring our wayward sheep here before me."

The Lestranges marched out of the Great Hall with twenty Death Eaters in their wake.

“This is a momentous day,” Voldemort stated as he strolled in front of the Head Table. “I have the three most *important* people in my life before me in the same room.”

The Dark Lord paused in front of Neville.

“Even though you are in the prophesy and therefore *important*, you, boy, were nothing more than a mote of dust in the eye of my god-head,” the fiend said to Neville. “The first time I killed you, you were begging and pleading for your worthless life.”

“*CRUCIO!*” Voldemort shouted and Neville screamed. After a moment he lifted the curse and Neville ceased screaming. Ginny, Luna, and Ron quickly huddled around the tortured young man.

“As for you old man,” Voldemort walked up to Dumbledore, “you have been slightly more than a nuisance...*CRUCIO!*”

Dumbledore tried to refrain from giving the fiend the satisfaction by showing the pain he was feeling, but it became too much. He began to scream under the Cruciatus Curse as his body continued to thrash against his invisible bonds that held him prisoner. Voldemort held the curse on the aging Headmaster for a full minute.

As he ended the curse, Voldemort turned to Lily with an evil grin upon his snake-like face.

“And finally, you, the murderer,” Voldemort said. “Out of the three, you are easily the most *important*. You are the one to have caused me the most pain. So much pain that I think I should return it in kind.”

The fiend took a step closer to Lily but raised his wand at Alice, without bothering to look at the young girl. Alice began to recoil in fear, but two Death Eaters rushed up behind her and held her fast.

“Mum,” Alice moaned as she began to shake, “Dad...”

“NO!” STOP!” Lilly yelled. A triumphant smile crept across Voldemort’s face. “Please. Please, I’ll do anything,” she begged.

“Anything?” Voldemort mocked. “I think I shall enjoy this.” The fiend held out his left hand while continuing to hold the threat against Alice by keeping his wand pointed straight at Lily’s daughter. The Death Eaters who were holding Lily released her as if on cue. “Kneel and kiss my hand.”

Lily knew there was nothing else she could do. She couldn’t defend her children against an Unforgivable Curse, especially without her wand. She already had to witness her son, Remmy, being tortured, she couldn’t bare the thought of her daughter suffering as well.

Lily built up her courage and forced herself to march up to the Dark Lord. Her knees trembled as she genuflected before Voldemort. With bile creeping up into her mouth, Lily pressed her lips to his cold hand.

“Ah, you cannot imagine what this makes me feel, murderer,” Voldemort said coldly. A single tear escaped Lily’s eyes. “After all the pain you have caused me, I shall enjoy humiliating you and seeing you suffer. *CRUCIO!*”

Alice’s screams echoed off the walls in the Great Hall as she writhed on the floor next to her brother. Lily knew she couldn’t stop Voldemort from harming Alice without her wand. Instead, she scurried over to her daughter to try to help her in some way, completely forgetting the shame of having to bow before Voldemort and kiss his hand like some groveling servant. As Lily reached Alice’s side, Voldemort ended the curse and the young girl ceased her screams. Lily clutched both her son and daughter to her as she glowered at the Dark Lord. The monster smiled mirthlessly at Lily as he, once again, swung his wand to point at a new target without looking. This time the wand’s target was James.

The fake smile disappeared from Voldemort’s face and pure hatred burned in his eyes. Lily knew that the monster wasn’t going to use the Cruciatus Curse on her husband, but something far worse. A soft “no” escaped her lips.

“AVADA KEDA...!” Voldemort began to shout the Killing Curse, but an explosion from somewhere in the castle cut off his incantation. Dust and small bits of masonry rained down as the castle shook. As another explosion rocked the ancient building, a loud scream accompanied the blast.

“Ah, it looks as if we will have a few new *guests* joining us soon,” Voldemort chuckled as he turned his back on James. “Let the Blood-Traitor spend his last few remaining moments with his poor excuse for a family.”

As soon as he was released, James rushed to his wife and kids and hugged them tight.

The Dark Lord walked up to where Dumbledore was restrained. The magical bonds holding Albus in place must have been weakening; he had begun to be able to move his arms slightly.

“Well, we can’t have that, now can we?” Voldemort mockingly asked as he waved his wand in front of Dumbledore to strengthen the bonds. Albus sat as still as a statue after Voldemort had cast the silent spell.

Voldemort casually conjured an elaborate throne in front of Dumbledore’s seat and sat down to wait.

“Tell me,” Voldemort addressed the children from the other timeline, who were kneeling in front of him. “Who are the other two children?”

Lily’s blood froze. She slowly turned her gaze towards the area where Paullina and Albert Granger sat. Remus and Sirius were trying to shield the Muggle couple, as well as Michelle and Emilia, from the Death Eaters’ attentions. If Voldemort found out that one of the children was her Harry, the monster would use him to further taunt and torture Lily. But an even worse thought was that if he found out the other child, Hermione, was a Muggle-Born and that her parents were in the castle right now, Voldemort would kill them without thought or hesitation. Apparently the children had the same thought as Lily because they all remained silent.

“Well, who are they?” Voldemort sat at them as he leveled his wand at Luna’s head. “Tell me, or you will suffer!”

The other time-line's Luna began to visibly tremble, but kept her mouth firmly shut.

"CRUCIO!" Voldemort shouted, but Ron dove in front of Luna, taking the curse instead.

Ron screamed and thrashed on the floor for a moment. Voldemort lifted the curse and stalked to stand over Ron's still twitching body.

"Tell me, boy; who are they?" Voldemort hissed.

Ron closed his eyes as he composed himself before speaking softly, "For a berk who spent the better part of thirteen years without a body, you'd think that patience would be one of your strong suits."

Voldemort's eyes bulged in rage and he practically shoved his wand in the red-haired boy's face. "CRUCIO!"

Ron's screams filled the Great Hall once again. This time, Voldemort did not lift the curse until a full minute passed. The young man convulsed once before passing out as Voldemort returned to his throne. The other time-line's Ginny and Luna pulled Ron's limp body onto their laps. Luna cooed softly as she stroked his hair comfortingly.

The doors to the Great Hall suddenly flew open and all eyes turned to see a young witch with untamable brown hair proudly walk in, followed by Poppy Pomfrey and four Death Eaters. Lily half-hoped, yet half-dreaded, to see her son following the young woman: part of her longed to have her son safe and in her arms, but the other part wanted him as far away from Voldemort as possible. Although Hermione was walking with an air of victory, she had a prominent gash under her left eye while a nasty bruise was developing on the right side of her face.

"Where is the other child?" Voldemort demanded. "And where are my other servants?"

The Death Eaters were hesitant to answer their master. Bellatrix slowly moved forward and knelt in front of the Dark Lord.

“Master, forgive us,” Bellatrix said meekly. “But we were not prepared...”

“Prepared for what?” Voldemort hissed.

“This girl is...” Bellatrix stammered nervously, “she is more skilled than we were expecting...”

The female Death Eater stopped speaking and recoiled in fear from the icy glare she received from Voldemort.

“What happened, Bellatrix?” Voldemort asked coldly.

“We had arrived at the Hospital Ward,” Bellatrix began to explain. “I ordered Cornwell, Peters, Hamilton, and Bluemoss to storm the room and take the children and Healer by surprise. But the children must have known we were coming.”

A wry grin stretched across Hermione’s face as Bellatrix glowered at the young witch.

“The moment Hamilton touched the door, it exploded,” Bellatrix continued. “All four of your Death Eaters were blown to bits. Before we could regroup, this one,” Bellatrix stabbed her thumb at Hermione, “rushed through the ruined doorway and began hexing us. Two of my Death Eaters were hit with some curse that made their eyes shrivel up in their skulls.”

“I don’t like Death Eaters,” Hermione explained quite calmly.

“You mean to tell me, that this *little girl* took out six of my followers?” Voldemort asked incredulously.

Lily felt a pang of guilt when Voldemort used the same insulting moniker for Hermione that she herself had used earlier in the day. But Lily tried to take solace in knowing that Voldemort wasn’t just using the phrase to hurt Hermione; he was using it to add insult Bellatrix’s failure.

“Not just six, Milord...” Bellatrix responded skittishly.

“WHAT!” Voldemort shouted. “How is it that one *little girl* could do this?”

“I have a good Defense Against the Dark Arts instructor,” Hermione responded without bothering to look at the Dark Lord. Lily knew that the young witch had to be using all of her courage to not show fear in front of the fiend.

“At least tell me the other child died in the battle and that is why he is not in your custody,” Voldemort said scathingly.

Lily’s heart sank, was her baby dead... *again*? Was this some cruel joke to give her back her first-born, just to take him away before she could even hold him again?

Bellatrix seemed to shrink even further under her Master’s evil glare.

“What happened?” Voldemort hissed between his clenched teeth.

“This girl was a distraction, Master,” Bellatrix stammered once more. “While she was switching MacGregor’s head for Rackharrow’s foot, I saw the other one, the boy, running off.”

Anger poured off of Voldemort. He stood so fast that he knocked his throne over. The fiend began to pace in front of the teachers’ table, seething in anger. Bellatrix cowered on the floor, silently begging for mercy.

Voldemort stopped suddenly and eyed Hermione menacingly. The young girl refused to flinch under his stare.

“Who is the boy, *girl*?” Voldemort demanded.

After a brief moment of silence, Hermione quoted, “*The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord.*”

“What nonsense is this? The Boy Who Lived is right there!” Voldemort said pointing at Neville. “Do not tell me lies, *girl*! The boy mentioned in the prophesy is right...”

Voldemort froze as realization danced across his eyes. He slowly turned his attention to Lily.

“Potter,” Voldemort said in an amused fashion. “It’s the Potter boy.”

The fiend barked a laugh and clapped his hands.

“I get to kill your Half-Blood Mutt again!” Voldemort cried out triumphantly. “And this time, I will get to make you watch!”

Lily repressed a gasp as Voldemort chuckled mirthlessly.

“So, Bella, did this *little girl* manage to kill the rest of your team?” Voldemort asked turning toward the cowering Death Eater.

“No... no Master,” Bellatrix replied. “After the boy, I mean the Potter boy turned a corner, the girl surrendered. Rodolphus and Rabastan took the remaining Death Eaters and chased after the boy.”

“Tell me, *girl*, did the Potter boy believe he could escape me?” Voldemort demanded from Hermione.

“Harry’s no coward,” Hermione defended Harry. “He went to recruit some help.”

“Help from whom?”

Hermione averted her eyes from Voldemort before answering, “He had to talk to a ghost-”

“A ghost!” Voldemort interrupted gleefully. Lily tried to comprehend what made her son think that a ghost could possibly help him. Ghosts were non-corporeal beings; they had absolutely no impact on anything in the physical world. Did Harry possibly hope that one of the ghosts could slip past the Death Eaters and go to Hogsmeade for reinforcements?

Apparently, the four children from the other time-line had the same questions on their minds as Lily did. Neville, Ginny, Luna, and Ron, who had regained consciousness after Hermione entered the Great Hall, looked at Hermione, pleading with their eyes for her to explain to

them why Harry did what he did. Lily saw the brunette witch lock eyes with the other Ginny and mouth the simple phrase, “I’m sorry.”

Ginny’s face contorted into a mask of horror as the girl began to tremble. Luna, Neville, and Ron all embraced Ginny and tried to silently comfort her. All this went unnoticed by Voldemort, who was laughing almost hysterically.

“A ghost? This is brilliant! But what to do with my Death Eater who let a *little girl* get the better of her, and let a boy escape her clutches,” the Dark Lord began as he stood in front of the prostrate Death Eater, Bellatrix, and gestured for her to stand. With her knees visibly shaking, she got up to her feet. “Bella, I was going to punish you for letting the half-blood mutt get away, but this turn of events is just too entertaining. You may retake your place at my side.”

Bellatrix scampered to Voldemort and kissed the hem of his robes like a good sycophant. She then took her place behind Voldemort’s throne, beside the two unknown Death Eaters who had remained silent the whole time.

Hermione stood in front of the teachers’ table scrutinizing Bellatrix and the two other Death Eaters.

“I know who two of you are, but who is the third?” Hermione asked aloud. After a moment, the young witch snapped her fingers. “I have a question for you, Crouch,” Hermione began. The Death Eater standing between Bellatrix and the unknown masked man with a silver glove, recoiled as if Hermione had slapped him. “Did you let Moody die like a man or did you make him rot in his own trunk?”

“Barty Crouch?” James blurted out disbelievingly.

“Barty Crouch, Jr. actually.” Hermione corrected.

“How do you know of him?” Voldemort asked, visibly taken back at the fact that Hermione knew his masked Death Eater’s identity.

“In our world, this fool exposed both his identity and plan to Harry,” Hermione explained, never taking her eyes off of Crouch. “He was so desperate to see if he was Voldemort’s favorite lap dog.” Hermione

continued, this time her comments were directed to the Death Eater in question, "You hurt and betrayed Harry; he won't thank you for it.

"And you," Hermione said turning her attention to Bellatrix, "you killed Sirius and then mocked Harry's pain. You will die the quickest out of the three of you.

"But you, Rat," Hermione addressed the Death Eater with the silver hand. James stirred when Hermione referred to him as a rat. "You hurt Harry the most next to Voldemort. Harry and I devised a special hex just for you, Wormtail."

Lily grabbed James's hand to stop him from attacking the despicable man who had betrayed them and caused the death of their son.

"If you are done with your empty threats, *little girl*," Voldemort stated, "please take your seat next to your friends."

Hermione complied and sat next to the still trembling Ginny. The brunette witch leaned into Ginny's ear and began to whisper to her.

"And now, I believe we should wait for our last guest," Voldemort said turning to Lily. "I think I shall enjoy killing him. I have been given me the ultimate gift in order to enact my retribution, Mudblood."

Voldemort's red eyes burned into Lily's as a cold chuckle escaped the fiend's throat. Lily could not help but to tear her gaze away from the monster. Voldemort turned away from her as he continued his cold laughter.

Lily noticed something moving on the edge of her vision. Her eyes focused on a line of tiny spiders marching across the floor, up the wall, and out through a small crack in the window. The auburn-haired witch began to ponder on what would cause dozens of spider to act so strangely when Voldemort once again cast the Cruciatus Curse on Dumbledore and the old man's screams began to fill the Hall once more.

Nearly half an hour had passed since Hermione had been marched into the Great Hall, and yet the Death Eaters sent after Harry had still

not returned. Lily was on the verge of panic. She began to imagine the worse had befallen her son; that Harry was being beaten and tortured by the Lestranges and their Death Eaters. Or that the Death Eaters would kill her son before she would be given the chance to tell him how much she loves him.

A low growl from Voldemort drew Lily's attention. Voldemort wasn't a patient man and he had obviously reached his limit and was visibly agitated. He was once again stomping back and forth in front of the teachers' table. He stopped in front of Bellatrix and hissed, "Where are they?"

Bellatrix hastily pulled a small hand-held mirror from her robes and began to address it, when Voldemort tore it out of her hands.

"Rodolphus Lestrange," Voldemort said to the mirror with anger in his voice. After a brief moment, a voice emanated from the mirror.

"Yes, master?" the masculine voice asked.

"What is taking you so long?" Voldemort demanded. "Where is the Potter boy?"

"Forgive me, my Lord," Rodolphus' voice begged, "we followed the boy into this bathroom as quickly as we could, but he seems to be missing. There's no other exit from here, and this ghost isn't being helpful."

"I've told you the truth!" a girl's whiney voice cried out from the mirror. Lily felt nauseous; she immediately recognized the voice. It was Moaning Myrtle, the ghost who haunted the second floor girl's toilet. Why would Harry try to seek help from that ghost out of all of them was beyond Lily's comprehension. Myrtle was the most bothersome ghost in the castle. She could make Peeves seem helpful at times.

"As I told you before," Myrtle's shrewish voice echoed from the mirror, "I heard a boy's voice here in my bathroom. When I came out to yell at him, he was gone."

"Who is that speaking?" asked Voldemort.

“It’s Moaning Myrtle, Master,” Rodolphus stated. “She’s the ghost that haunts this girl’s loo.”

“I do not recall that ghost,” Voldemort replied off-handedly.

Hermione interjected herself into the Death Eaters’ conversation. “I find it most peculiar that you don’t remember Myrtle,” she said. “Seeing as you’re the one who turned her into a ghost in the first place.”

“I have turned a great deal of people into ghosts, *little girl*,” Voldemort hissed at Hermione.

“This one was your first,” Hermione retorted as she bravely looked into Voldemort’s eyes. “Or rather, your pet’s first.”

A look of confusion appeared on Voldemort’s face.

“They are in the girl’s bathroom on the second floor,” Hermione continued. “*And the Dark Lord will mark him as an equal.*”

Comprehension dawned in Voldemort’s eyes. He turned his attention back to the mirror and spoke slowly and clearly, “Rodolphus, listen to me very carefully. Leave the room, immediately, and barricade the door-”

“Pardon me, Master,” Rodolphus interrupted, “but one of the wash basins is moving. It’s *opening...*”

Lily noticed with some alarm that the other time-line’s Ginny began to tremble harder than she had before and that she had clutched onto Hermione’s robes. Lily could hear Hermione try to comfort the younger witch by whispering in her ear, “It’ll be over soon.”

“Master, there is something coming out of...” Rodolphus’ voice began before a loud thud emanated from the mirror. Voldemort roared and threw the mirror, shattering it.

“Master, what happened?” Bellatrix asked.

“Your husband, his brother, and all of my Death Eaters who accompanied them, are dead,” Voldemort answered coldly. The fiend resumed his pacing in front of the Head Table, cursing under his breath.

Voldemort abruptly stopped and turned to a masked Death Eater and addressed him. “Lucius,” he commanded, as the Death Eater immediately dropped to one knee, “leave me two dozen Death Eaters and lead the rest outside this hall. Do not let anything pass you or enter the Great Hall.”

“Sire, what shall we prepare for?” Lucius asked.

“Prepare to fight to the death,” Voldemort answered.

Lucius hesitated for a brief second before standing and ordering twenty-four Death Eaters to stay, one of whom was the only unmasked Death Eater, his son Draco. The elder Malfoy commanded the remaining forty Death Eaters out of the Great Hall.

After the giant doors swung closed, Voldemort turned to Hermione and said, “I know what you are planning, *little girl*. You and your half-blood mutt friend are hoping that I will try and stop the monster from killing my servants, since I am the only other living Parseltongue. And when I would have foolishly left the Great Hall, you would free the old Muggle-lover, Dumbledore, wouldn’t you?”

Hermione refused to look at Voldemort as he continued his rant.

“And while I was busy with the monster, Dumbledore would then make short work of my Death Eaters. Unfortunately *little girl*, your plan has failed.”

Without warning, screams from outside the Great Hall erupted without warning. Dozens of voices were heard shouting a bevy of curses and hexes.

The Death Eaters in the Great Hall stood and watched the door nervously, as if the horror that lay on the other side of the door was about to burst through at any second. Voldemort, on the other hand, was idly twirling his wand between his fingers.

The screams from outside the doors made Lily's blood run cold. Even though they were Death Eaters and, more than likely deserved to die because of their crimes, the horror in their cries was nearly unbearable.

One by one, the screams ended abruptly. Only a few of the Death Eaters continued their terror-filled cries. Lily could hear something gigantic being dragged along the floor on the other side of the door. A sickening crunching sound accompanied the end of one particular scream. Within a mere half-minute since the onslaught of screams and shouts began, only three or four voices could be heard.

Lily reasoned that whatever the monster was, it had to be some sort of snake, otherwise Voldemort wouldn't have mentioned that he would be able to control it because he was a Parseltongue. But what kind of snake could create such havoc? Before Lily could finish her ponderings, a final cry echoed from outside the Great Hall, and then silence.

For several seconds, no sound emanated from the corridor. Suddenly, a single voice shouted out a Blasting Hex. Draco Malfoy's face beamed with pride as he obviously recognized the caster's voice.

Almost immediately, the doors swung open and a Death Eater stumbled his way into the Great Hall. All eyes were drawn to the giant snake that lay motionless on the floor behind the Death Eater.

"Master, it was a Basilisk," Lucius Malfoy stated as he tore off his now-ruined mask. His face was obscured with blood, but whether it was his own or someone else's, Lily couldn't tell. The Death Eater also had his eyes lowered and half-closed, as if he was trying to ignore the pain of his wound.

"Yes, I know," Voldemort hissed impatiently. "What happened to the Potter boy?"

Lily leaned forward, desperate for any news on her son.

"I saw a boy who looked like the blood-traitor Potter, but he fell when he was hit with a stray *Killing Curse*," Lucius responded, putting an odd emphasis on the phrase "*Killing Curse*."

Lily and James hung their heads in sorrow. Apparently, fate had played a vicious joke after all. They were teased with the idea of holding their first-born child after sixteen long years, just to have Harry die again. Lily pushed her grieving aside; she had to make sure her two other children would survive the day, somehow. She also vowed to make sure that her son's friends would survive as well. She looked up to see how the children were dealing with the news of their friend's death, particularly Hermione, her son's fiancée. Lily was surprised to see the five children in a hushed conversation, but with no visible signs of sadness. She did notice that they each had a look of determination in their eyes.

"Oh, how I wanted to torture him and make you watch, murderer," Voldemort taunted Lily. The monster raised his wand and pointed it at Remmy and Alice. "At least, I can take comfort in knowing that you have two more half-blood mutts with which I can torment."

"I find it very ironic that you insult them by calling the Potters '*half-blood mutts*,'" Hermione said, standing up. "I mean, it's not much of an insult when you're a '*half-blood mutt*' yourself, is it... Tom!"

"What did you say?" Voldemort snarled, turning on Hermione.

"I called you by the name your mother gave you," said Hermione defiantly. "Tom Marvolo Riddle, she did name you after your Muggle father after all."

"If you know what is good for you, you will shut your mouth, child," Voldemort hissed through clenched teeth. "And if you knew what this mudblood bitch has done, you would not defend her so easily. It would make your pure and righteous heart skip a beat."

"Not really," Hermione retorted. "I, too, would have used the Killing Curse on you, if I'd been placed in her position." James gasped aloud as Lily stared at Hermione dumbstruck.

"Ah, I see the old man has finally stopped lying and told the truth after sixteen years," said Voldemort, turning to Dumbledore.

"No, I just figured it out," Hermione answered. Everyone in the Great Hall turned their attention to the brunette witch as she explained.

“Dumbledore knew that using the Killing Curse on you would’ve been pointless; because of the prophesy, only Neville or Harry could kill you. Even if baby Neville’s life was in immediate danger, Dumbledore would merely have restrained you. In our world, you were trying to kill Harry in the Ministry of Magic and our Dumbledore only tried to confine you because he knew anything else would have been pointless. But in this world, Lily had just witnessed her baby being murdered by some spineless coward...”

‘She knows, Hermione knows the secret,’ Lily thought to herself in total panic. Lily had accompanied Albus, James, Sirius, and Remus to the Longbottom’s house that horrible night. She had jumped over Alice and Frank’s bodies, paying them no heed, and ran into the nursery well ahead of the others. There she had found the monster looming over the crib, his lips curled cruelly as he pointed his wand at the defenseless baby. It was Lily, with blinding rage coursing through her veins, who shouted the Killing Curse without a cognitive thought in her head besides revenge. Lily had to kill the bastard for taking away her baby.

As a bizarre mixture of guilt and relief filled Lily with the knowledge that her secret being finally disclosed, she caught an odd movement out the corner of her eye. She turned and saw that nearly everyone in the Great Hall, student, teacher, and Death Eater alike, had their attention glued to the interchange between Hermione and Voldemort. Everyone save for Lucius Malfoy.

The pale Death Eater was strolling throughout the Great Hall silently casting what looked to be a Homing Charm on each of the Death Eaters standing amongst the students. Lucius glanced in Lily’s direction and froze momentarily. Lily and the Death Eater locked eyes for a brief second. She gasped aloud, but it wasn’t because Lucius was wearing spectacles, which he must have put on when Hermione was arguing with Voldemort. The reason Lily lost her breath is because of the bright green eyes staring at her from behind those glasses. They were her eyes; the same eyes that Harry had inherited. ‘Lucius’ gestured for Lily to remain silent as he continued to mark another Death Eater with the Homing Charm.

“HOW DARE YOU!” Voldemort screamed at the insult. The fiend leveled his wand at Hermione’s heart. “That worthless mudblood bitch caused me such pain, and you defend her!”

“You murdered her baby; any mother would have done the same,” Hermione said defiantly. “It’s easy to figure that Dumbledore took the ‘credit’ for the Unforgivable in order to protect Lily,” Hermione continued. “Every Death Eater would have tried to seek revenge against Lily for *killing* you. But everyone knows that they, like you, are afraid of Dumbledore and wouldn’t dare to risk an attack against him.”

“Shall I show you a small taste of the pain that she caused me,” Voldemort threatened Hermione and he took a step towards the witch. “Perhaps then, you will not defend the mudblood murderer?”

Lily saw her son, still disguised as Lucius, stop and turn toward the evil fiend threatening his friend. He leveled his wand at Voldemort.

By Lily’s count, Harry had only marked half of the Death Eaters standing in the Great Hall. Whatever his plan was, Lily knew that Harry hadn’t completed his preparation, yet he was about to abandon this plan in order to save Hermione. Making her decision, Lily rapidly stood up, nearly knocking James and her children over in the process.

“This is so typical of you, you coward!” Lily said loudly.

“What did you say?” asked a shocked Voldemort, as he turned his attention to Lily.

“Apparently you are also hard of hearing on top of being a coward!” Lily stated defiantly with only a slight tremble in her voice.

“WHAT!” Voldemort screeched. The fiend stomped toward Lily and shoved his wand in her face. Lily saw out of the corner of her eye that Harry had gone back to marking the remaining Death Eaters. She breathed a sigh of relief knowing that her distraction had worked. But for the distraction to continue, Lily needed to keep Voldemort’s attention on her.

“I called you a coward!” shouted Lily as she looked into Voldemort’s hate filled eyes. Anger was pouring off the so-called Dark Lord. Lily

knew that Voldemort was so angry that he couldn't concentrate enough to use his Legiminiency skills on her. "With all of your power, the best you can do is threaten an unarmed school girl! That's all you have EVER been good at!"

Then Lily did something no one, not even Lily herself, was expecting: she slapped the fiend across his face. A collective gasp filled the Great Hall as Voldemort staggered backward. The Dark Lord touched the great red welt on his face and pointed his wand at Lily once more.

"You shall pay for that, you murdering whore!" he spat. Lily braced herself for whatever punishment Voldemort had planned for her when she heard a voice emanating from in front of them.

"I wouldn't do that if I were you, Tom," Lucius said. All eyes in the Great Hall turned to Lucius who had walked over to stand in front of Voldemort.

"How dare you call me...?" Voldemort began to hiss at the blond Death Eater. Voldemort froze as he finally noticed that Malfoy was wearing glasses. "What? How can this be?"

"What? Didn't anyone tell you that I was a Metamorphmagus?" began 'Lucius'. He screwed his eyes shut and his features changed in an instant. Where Lucius once stood, now was a tall and thin young man with a cruel face. He spoke in a familiar high-pitched voice and said, "This is how I was able to control the Basilisk; I just changed myself to look like you did when you first opened the Chamber, back when you were a student, Tom. It's quite simple."

The young man standing in front of Voldemort closed his eyes once again and not only did his features begin to change, his entire body did as well. Within a second, Lily's undersized son stood where the tall, cruel man once was. Harry, back to his own size, was now practically swimming in Lucius' Death Eater garb.

"You are a fool, boy," Voldemort said with a chuckle. "You are outnumbered twenty-eight to one. You should have brought the Basilisk in with you, only then you might have had a chance."

"And risk you taking control over it? No thanks," Harry replied, as he wiped the blood off of his forehead, revealing his odd lightning bolt scar. "Besides, too many innocents could've been killed."

"In order to win, you have to be willing to make sacrifices," Voldemort stated. The fiend gestured to the three Death Eaters behind him and they started to move.

Crouch grabbed Hermione, hoisting her up and holding the petite girl in front of him like a shield. Pettigrew did the same with Ginny. Lily was distracted, with her attention, momentarily fixed on Hermione and Ginny's predicament, she did not see Bellatrix walk up behind her.

"Imperio!" Bellatrix shouted from behind Lily.

Lily felt her mind go blank. She felt as if she were floating.

'*Stand up*', a voice in Lily's head commanded; a voice which sounded like Bellatrix's. She could feel herself rise up from the floor, but it was as if Lily was completely detached from her body.

'*Walk to my Master*', the voice ordered. Lily felt herself move to stand next to Voldemort.

"I will teach you a lesson, boy," Voldemort hissed as he drew Lily's wand from out of his robes. "To survive, to win, you have to be prepared to sacrifice. To beat me, you will have to kill your mother."

'*Take the wand...*' Lily saw her hand accept the wand from Voldemort.
'*Now, kill the brat!*'

Lily could feel herself move to stand in front of Harry, she also felt Bellatrix take up her position directly behind Lily.

'Kill the boy!'

"There is no defense for the Killing Curse, boy. You cannot defend yourself against it," Voldemort said with amusement, as Lily raised her wand and pointed it at Harry. The Dark Lord waved his wand and a magical shield appeared in front of Lily. "This shield will block

everything except the Unforgivable Curses. Of course, if you try to use anything besides the Killing Curse, my Death Eaters will kill twenty students."

'Kill the boy! Kill him!'

Lily felt hatred build up within her body.

"Lily, fight it!" Lily heard James beg. "For the love of God, fight it!"

"The only way for you to survive, boy, is to kill your mother!" Voldemort sneered.

Ignoring Voldemort, Harry casually pulled a canvas sack out of his robes and let his hands hang at his side. He looked at Lily with a kind smile. His oversized shirt hung open, revealing the bizarre jagged "X"-shaped scar. Lily saw Ron out of the corner of her eye, crouching, as if he was preparing himself to jump at something.

"Before you have me killed, Tom, let me ask you a question," began Harry as if there wasn't anything to fear. "Aren't you the least bit interested as to why I spent so much time in the Chamber just now?"

"Not in the slightest, boy," Voldemort hissed.

'Say the words!' Bellatrix's voice demanded. *'You've said them before!'*

Lily's mind tried to focus on Harry's scar, something about it was important. Something about a similar scar...

"Avada Kedavra!" Lily heard herself scream. The moment the curse left Lily's wand, Bellatrix lifted the Imperius Curse. Lily's mind became her own just in time to watch her son die once again, but this time, it would be at her hands. Lily's heart plummeted as she saw the green bolt race toward her child. She was taken back at how happy Harry looked, as if he had wanted this to happen. The Killing Curse hit Harry square in the chest, a few centimeters to the left of his X-shaped scar.

“NOW, RON!” Hermione shouted. Ron leapt at Lily, tackling her to the ground.

Lily could not take her eyes off of Harry as she and Ron fell. She expected to see Harry crumple to the ground like a rag-doll; instead, he only hunched over a bit and was surrounded by a strange green aura. Lily watched as the green aura quickly turned black, and new jagged “X” was carved into Harry’s chest.

Then, suddenly, the black aura surrounding Harry flew off of his body in a bolt. Everyone followed the bolt as it rocketed back toward Bellatrix, who was standing in a daze, directly behind where Lily had just been standing. Bellatrix gasped right before the black bolt hit her in the face. Her agonized cry filled the Great Hall as the rebounded Killing Curse turned the witch into dust.

Both Crouch and Pettigrew dropped their hostages out of shock and fear. Peter immediately scurried to stand at Voldemort’s side for protection, while Crouch reeled backwards away from the pile of dust that had been Bellatrix Lestrange.

“Sorry about tackling you like that, Mrs. Potter,” Ron said into Lily’s ear. “But the Unforgivable Curses affect Harry differently than the rest of us.”

Lily turned her attention back to her son, who staggered for his balance for a brief second before standing upright. Harry grunted as he unexpectedly threw the canvas sack into the air. Scores of silver darts flew from the satchel, and Harry rapidly performed a Banishing Charm on them. Each dart soared at a Death Eater; they were obviously charmed to seek those people in the Great Hall who had had a Homing Charm placed on them. The Death Eaters squealed in pain as a minimum of two darts pierced their flesh. Lily noted with interest that none of the darts flew at Crouch, Pettigrew, or Voldemort. She wondered if Harry did so intentionally and if he had special plans for those three.

“KILL HIM!” Voldemort screamed at his Death Eaters. As the Death Eaters who were standing amongst the students started to move toward Harry, something odd happened. Some of the smaller Death Eaters started to stumble.

Harry paid the approaching thugs no heed as he quickly leveled his wand at the traitorous Wormtail; Harry shouted, "*Muris Adfectio!*"

Everyone in the Great Hall froze as Pettigrew let out a blood-curdling scream. Peter was slowly changing into his rat form, however something was horribly wrong.

Lily had seen her husband change into his animagus form many times in the past. The transformation from human to stag was always beautiful and elegant, like a ballet. The way Peter was changing now was painful and disgusting! Lily could hear Peter's bones crack and break as his left hand shriveled into a rat's paw, while the rest of his arm stayed in its human form. The unchanging skin around his mouth and nose started to tear, as the bones of his face reformed into a grotesque snout. The traitor's right arm painfully shrunk to a rat's foreleg and back to his normal form within a second, but the entire time, his silver hand stayed human. His right arm began to change again, but this time, his silver hand ripped off of his flesh and hit the ground with a clank of metal. The little man screamed even louder as his left leg transformed into a giant rat's leg, yet his human foot remained unchanged.

After several gruesome seconds, Wormtail fell to the floor in a heap, spewing blood from his mouth and the stump of his arm. His body no longer looked human, but a sickening combination of a rat and man.

As everyone was distracted by watching Wormtail's body twitch once more before dying, Harry launched a rapid series of Cutting and Slicing Hexes at Crouch. With a horrifying spray of arterial blood, Crouch's leg was cut off below his knee, his eye was brutally gouged out, and a chunk of his nose was torn away. Obviously dying, Crouch tried futilely to crawl to safety, leaving a trail of his own blood behind him. To Lily, he suddenly looked like a monstrous copy of "Mad-Eye" Moody.

Voldemort quickly recovered after watching three of his most trusted servants die. The Dark Lord shouted a command to the rest of his Death Eaters, "KILL THE BOY!"

The Death Eaters instinctively responded to their master's orders and began to encroach on Harry once more.

“You really should’ve asked me what it was that I was doing down in the Chamber that took me so long, Tom,” Harry said with a wicked smile. Suddenly, the Death Eaters who had been staggering began to fall. The Death Eaters who had more than two darts in their bodies stopped and began to shake violently. “If you had asked, I would’ve answered: ‘milking the Basilisk for its venom and then conjuring a bunch of darts so that I could quickly poison your followers.’”

The Death Eaters began to drop like flies. Lily noticed Draco Malfoy groan pitifully as he crumpled to the floor like his masked brethren. Voldemort pointed his wand at Harry and said: “My followers may not be able kill you, but the prophesy states that I can. *Avada Kedavra!*”

“*Expelliarmus!*” Harry shouted, and the two magical bolts struck in midair. Lily gasped as a thin golden thread appeared between Harry and Voldemort’s wand.

“*Priori Incantatem!*” Lily said in a near whisper. She had heard of this happening when wands with similar or brother cores dueled, but never witnessed it before. Both Harry and Voldemort were struggling under its effects. Lily wanted to help, but was at a loss as to how.

“Harry!” Hermione shouted. “Voldemort used this world’s Neville to resurrect himself, not you! Your Blood Protection still works!”

Whatever Hermione was talking about, Harry understood. He broke the connection between the two wands and charged at Voldemort. The fiend shouted a vulgarity as Harry physically tackled him to the ground. The two men struggled on the ground and Lily was shocked to see smoke rising from their intertwined bodies.

Within a second, Harry had somehow gained the upper hand and wrapped his hands around Voldemort’s throat. Lily saw painful burn blisters pop up all over Harry’s hands and forearms. But the injuries that Harry was suffering were nothing compared to Voldemort’s. The burn blisters that marred Harry’s flesh also covered the fiend’s neck and face. As if the touch of the two combatants was actually corrosive to each other. Lily could hear bone and cartilage creaking and cracking as Harry crushed the villain’s throat. The Dark Lord’s flesh soon cracked open and his blood was pouring out between Harry’s clenched fingers. After what seemed like an eternity, Voldemort

stopped struggling and his blood ceased to flow. He was dead, finally dead.

Harry slowly and weakly stood up. Extreme pain etched his face. His hands and arms were disfigured with burns. Both Lily and Hermione made their way to Harry when he suddenly collapsed unconscious to the floor.

Lily froze as she looked at her son's motionless body, while Hermione ran to his side.

"Harry," Hermione cried as she cradled his head in her lap. "Harry, baby... wake up... please, wake up..."

To Be Concluded

Author's Notes: Thank you for reading my fic. I would like to thank my beta sasqch.

Epilogue

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WARNING: Harsh Language and adult themes and violence

Epilogue Summary: Lily deals with the events of the Holiday and finally spends some time with her new son.

After the news of the Death Eater attack made it to the Ministry, the school was overrun with concerned parents, Ministry officials, and reporters. Due to the added chaos of the extra people and the traumatic experience she had just gone through, it wasn't unusual that the next few days were a blur for Lily. She had a vague recollection of Poppy leading the wounded students and teachers into the Hospital Ward after Voldemort fell. Luckily, none of the students or teachers were severely injured. None that is save for Harry.

Poppy told Lily that her son had slipped into a coma due to both the physical injuries he suffered and an extreme case of magical exhaustion. Apparently, besides the severe burns, Harry had critically drained his magical reserves during his struggle with Voldemort.

Lily ended up visiting her eldest son in the Hospital Ward during every spare moment she could find. She would watch his unconscious, unmoving body as he lay in the coma. Lily watched him while trying desperately to come up with a way to help her son.

Lily would often spend these visits speaking with Hermione, who had outright refused to leave Harry's side. The younger witch had gone so far as to commandeer the bed next to Harry's as her own. Lily would've done the same thing, but she had two other distraught children to care for. She had spent a full day trying to ease the nerves of Remmy and Alice, and to assure them that everything was fine.

It was during her regular visits to the Hospital Ward that Lily took the initiative to get to know the woman who had her son's heart. Hermione would tell Lily tales of Harry's life. Lily quickly formed a bond with Hermione. Through these conversations, she discovered that they had a great deal in common; they were both compassionate women who were intelligent and brave, and they just happened to both be in love with stubborn, brave, and proud men.

Hermione used this time to get to know her own family, as well. Paullina, Edward, and Emilia would often visit with Hermione during her vigil in the Hospital Ward. Sometimes, Lily happened to be in there when the Grangers would stop by and visit. Hermione took a great amount of joy in playing with her new-found baby sister.

The news of the rebirth and death of Voldemort had spread like wildfire throughout the wizarding world. The press had a field day; the main story in the *Daily Prophet* for several days after the attack was that the Ministry had somehow conspired with Voldemort and his followers after his rebirth and that those in charge had placed Death Eaters in key points within the government. Due to the public outcry, an investigation was immediately launched into corruption in the government. In the aftermath, a number of Ministry officials were sacked and some were even arrested on charges of corruption. Fudge himself had resigned his post on November 7th, and Amelia Bones was elected as the new Minister of Magic.

The press was also clamoring with stories about how Voldemort had been killed by Dumbledore. Of course, there were still a few random rumors that someone else was the one to actually vanquish the Dark Lord, but no one believed them: especially the one where a scrawny boy physically strangled the most feared dark wizard in recent history. Not when Dumbledore, the greatest Wizard alive, admitted to defeating The Dark Lord in a press conference. Of course, the press had eaten up Dumbledore's heroic tale.

Lily couldn't express her gratitude for the older wizard as once again, he took the '*credit*' for Voldemort's downfall. Sixteen years before, Dumbledore knew that not only was Lily in danger of retaliation from Death Eaters, but that she and her family would also be in danger from the press. He realized that during such a fragile time in her life,

Lily would be torn apart by the media, and that she would never lead a normal life if the truth had gotten out; that she was the one who cast the Killing Curse at Voldemort. So Dumbledore took both the blame and the credit for Voldemort's downfall. Now, once again, Dumbledore had taken the blame and the credit, but this time it was to protect her son, Harry. It was the only way to ensure that he wouldn't have to face the public scrutiny, which was sure to follow.

It was during Harry's third day in the coma, that Dumbledore invited the other time-line's Ron, Neville, Ginny, and Luna, along with some of the faculty, to his office. He wanted the privacy to ask the children what had happened when Harry was hit with the Killing Curse, and more importantly, how they knew it would not affect him.

"We figured that it had to do with the prophesy," answered Ron. The young wizard had become the group's unofficial spokesman since Hermione refused to leave Harry's side. "Several months ago, Harry turned seventeen and the wards around the Dursley's house fell. A few of the Order's members were moving him out of his relatives' house when the Death Eaters attacked. When the attack started, the Order members were killed right away, which left Harry to try his best to protect his relatives..."

"Even though the blighters didn't deserve it," interjected the other time's Ginny. "After the way those bastards treated him, they were lucky Harry didn't try and help the Death Eaters kill them."

"Anyway," continued Ron, "when the reinforcements had finally arrived, Vernon had already been killed when he was Banished through a wall. Petunia and Dudley were trying to escape when one of the Death Eaters launched a Killing Curse at them. Trying to protect them, Harry jumped in the way of the curse and got hit by it. Everyone expected him to drop dead. But for some reason, the curse just bounced off of Harry and struck back at the Death Eater who cast it. The Death Eater got vaporized while all Harry got was a new scar."

"Since the prophesy stated that only Harry and Voldemort could kill each other, we kind of assumed that they were somewhat immortal, except if they fought each other," finished Ron.

“So when Harry was disguised as Lucius and stated that he died when he was hit with a Killing Curse...” Lily began.

“Hermione figured that it was really Harry, and that he was trying to tell us that he was fine and to continue with their plan,” Ron added. “Hermione had told us that when she and Harry were in the Hospital Ward and found out about the Death Eaters attacking the school through Harry’s link with You-Know-Who, they came up with their plan to use the Basilisk...”

“They both realized that I, I mean, this world’s me never opened the Chamber and that Slytherin’s monster was still alive,” Ginny continued. “Hermione formulated the plan where Harry would milk the Basilisk’s venom and then use the monster against any Death Eaters outside the Great Hall.”

“They planned on using the Basilisk to fight the Death Eaters?” asked Dumbledore. “That was very dangerous; dozens of innocents could have died.”

“Actually, they never intended for the monster to come inside the Great Hall,” Neville answered. “According to what Hermione told us in the Great Hall, if You-Know-Who hadn’t used the mirror to contact Lestrange, Hermione would’ve started to drop the needed hints or even come out and simply tell him about the monster. Hermione’s plan revolved around getting as many Death Eaters away from the students as possible; she knew that he would send his goons to do the dirty work. It just so happened that You-Know-Who did the hard part for her when he ‘found out’ about the Basilisk.”

“It was Harry who used the Blasting Hex on the monster,” Luna added in a dreamy tone. “He would never risk letting that thing be controlled by Riddle again. It had to be destroyed for everyone’s safety.”

“When Harry came in, disguised as Malfoy, and stated that he had seen ‘Harry die,’ Hermione knew that the plan was working,” Ron stated.

"And that's why Hermione confronted Voldemort, isn't it?" Lily asked. "To distract him, allowing Harry the time to put the Homing Charms on the all of the Death Eaters?"

"Yeah, and thanks for helping out," responded Ginny. "We thought the plan was blown when V-V-Voldemort threatened Hermione." Lily was silently impressed that Ginny had finally forced herself to say that fearful name. "That's Harry's weak spot; 'don't hurt his friends, especially Hermione.'" Ron, Neville, Luna, and Ginny shared a brief chuckle at their inside joke.

"Thank you very much for filling in the details, however, I am sad to say that I have some troubling news for the six of you," stated Dumbledore solemnly. "I have been scouring the library, as well as quietly questioning some of my colleagues, trying to find some way to return you to your proper time-line and, more importantly, your families. I'm saddened to tell you that such a task is impossible. Even if we were able to recreate the accident which brought you here, there would be no way to guide your 'journey'; you could end up in any one of millions of alternate time-lines. There is no way in which we can reunite you with your families."

"Actually Albus," Lily interjected, "I don't think that's an issue. I had overheard Hermione and my son talking, before the Death Eater attack. I don't believe they want to go back."

The four young wizards and witches from the other time-line shared a guilty look.

"I can tell from what little I heard, that the war that has waged in their time-line didn't go well for them," Lily continued. "Apparently, a number of their families are dead, or worse. Only death and pain wait for them in their time. But, here, their loved ones are alive and whole. From what I have learned, I wouldn't want to go back either. I'm sure that I speak for everyone here, when I say that we gladly accept them into our families and lives."

"Thank you, Professor Potter," Ron said with a genuine smile.

Eight days after the attack, Poppy bust into Lily's office with wonderful news; Harry had finally woken up! Poppy informed Lily that Harry was fine except that the young man was running a slight fever. Normally, in this situation, Poppy just gave her patients a Pepper-Up potion, but that potion would react adversely with the other potions that she was using to continue to heal the extreme burns on Harry's hands. Because of this, Poppy had decided to let Harry's immune system fight the mild fever.

"Are you going to go see him now?" Poppy asked.

Lily's first instinct was to knock Poppy out of her way as she rushed to the Hospital Ward, to hug her son. But she knew better. For one thing, Lily had decided to let Harry spend some time with his fiancée, Hermione. More importantly, from what Lily knew of her sister, Petunia, and the way that horrid woman must have raised her Harry, and the stories in which Hermione had shared with her concerning Harry's childhood, Lily knew that rushing into Harry's life and demanding to be part of it would be jarring, even harmful to the poor boy. Harry would have to be the one to invite her into his life.

"No, not just yet," Lily responded to the Healer's question. "I'll give Harry and Hermione a little time alone. Besides I have something I need to do first."

Lily took her time as she walked to the school's kitchen. When she finally entered, Lily was swarmed by a dozen helpful and eager house-elves.

"Whats can we's get for you, Mrs. Professor Lil-Lil?" asked one particularly excited elf, as he hopped in one place, offering Lily a plateful of kippers.

"Actually, I need some help collecting some ingredients," Lily answered. "But I need to make the soup by myself, if you don't mind."

Of course they did mind. One house-elf cried softly as Lily stirred the simmering soup, while a chubby one begged Lily to allow him to finish it. Lily tried to explain to them that this was something that only she could do and that they weren't doing anything wrong. But the poor little beings couldn't understand.

After it was done, Lily conjured a bed tray, silverware, and a bowl. She ladled the soup into the bowl and placed a Warming Charm on the bowl. She went to the Hospital Ward, and her son.

When Lily entered the Ward, she saw Hermione sitting on Harry's bed speaking to him.

"...she's an absolute cutie! She's smart, and clever. Do you know she's reading all by herself now? She hasn't shown any signs that she has any magic yet, but I swear if she does, she's destined to be in Ravenclaw. Emilia can count well past a hundred, and add as well. I can't begin to describe how wonderful it is to have a sister!" Hermione told Harry. "But you're going to find that out, soon! I mean, not only do you have a little sister, but you have a brother, too!"

"I'm really excited to meet them," replied Harry, with a rosy bloom to his cheeks.

"Emilia is a wonderful child, but..." Hermione continued in a hushed tone, "she's a bit of a chatterbox."

"I have no clue where she got that trait from," said Harry playfully, as he took one of his still-heavily bandaged hands and brushed a loose strand of Hermione's hair behind her ear. "It can't be a family trait, now can it?"

"Was that a crack, Potter?" Hermione retorted. The young witch laughed. Upon noticing Lily waiting patiently, Hermione greeted her. "Hello, Mrs. Potter."

Harry paled instantaneously as he finally saw his mother.

"I'll leave you two alone," said Hermione as she stood up and left the room after kissing Harry.

"Hello... Harry. How are you?" Lily had forced herself to not refer to the young man as "baby."

"I'm fine... m-ma'am," Harry said, and Lily noticed that he stuttered slightly when he referred to her as "ma'am". As if he wanted to call her something else but could not bring himself to say the word.

“Poppy told me you have slight fever,” said Lily, as she placed the bed tray in front of Harry. “There is a Muggle tradition when someone gets sick that they eat chicken soup. It’s said that it helps the body heal itself.”

On the way to visit Harry, Lily had internally practiced that line. What she had so desperately wanted to say was; “*when a child gets sick, his mum feeds him chicken soup.*” But she feared that because of his troubled upbringing, Harry could react poorly and possibly shut her out.

“And because of these dreadful things covering your hands,” began Lily as she gestured to the bandages covering his hands, “would you mind if I feed you?”

“Actually, I am kind of hungry... ma’am,” Harry said, while avoiding looking directly into Lily’s eyes.

Lily sat down on the bed next to the young man. With a tremble to her hand, Lily scooped up some of the soup and raised it to Harry’s lips. With slight trepidation, he opened his mouth.

“I know this is a little embarrassing, Harry,” stated Lily as Harry swallowed the soup. He shook his head with his eyes downcast. After the third spoonful, Lily asked him, “How is it?”

“Really good, ma’am,” he replied. Lily noticed that he too was trembling slightly. As she continued to feed him, Lily imagined what it must have been for Harry growing up with the Dureslys.

What she knew of her sister and her family, Lily could tell that Harry was never fed soup when he got sick. He was most likely told to toughen up, or worse, locked away so he couldn’t *infect* Dudley. And furthermore, whenever he had a scraped knee, the pain would never have been kissed away; instead he was probably told that he deserved it because of *what* he was. Whenever he would have woken up from a nightmare, he was never held lovingly nor reassured that the monster under the bed wasn’t real. He was never told a bedtime story or sung to so he could fall asleep. He was more than likely never even kissed goodnight.

As she spooned the last remnants of the soup for Harry, Lily noticed that she was crying softly. She saw that Harry had his face down, away from her.

“Ma’am, can I...?” Harry began to ask a question as Lily Vanished the tray and its contents. Lily could tell that he was fighting back tears, much like she was. “Can I...?” Harry began again, but abruptly stopped.

“Harry, you can ask me anything,” Lily said as she tried to compose herself.

“Can I call you ‘mum’?” he asked softly, and looked up and into Lily’s eyes. Lily could see years of pain in his eyes, years of pain because he was denied a mother.

“Yes, you can,” Lily said as her tears flowed freely down her face. Lily wrapped her arms around Harry’s thin frame and poured all of her love into him. “You can call me anything you like, baby.”

“Hello, mum,” said Harry as he melted into his mother’s embrace.

Mother and son sat on the bed, just holding each other until Harry fell asleep in her arms as she sang him a lullaby. Lily gazed at the young man in her arms and thought about those fateful Halloweens. For sixteen years, that was the worst holiday, they always reminded her of the death of her baby boy. But now, Halloween will be remembered for the day her baby boy came back to her.

Three days after Harry had woken up, Poppy finally released him, satisfied that he had healed completely. That night, the Grangers, Weasleys, Lovegoods, Potters, and Neville all enjoyed a feast in a magical room known as “*The Room of Requirement*” that somehow the six young people from the other time-line knew. Lily would’ve been fascinated by the charms and the basic magic in the Room if her attention wasn’t happily on her children. Harry was taking this opportunity to get to know his *new* brother and sister.

“You’ve seen the mere-people up close?” Remmy asked with awe. “What’re they like?”

“Well...” Harry paused as he tried to think of a way to describe them. “They’re not as pretty as you’d expect.”

“Forget that!” interrupted Alice. “I heard you can cast a corporeal Patronus!”

“Yeah, Remus taught me. I can teach you how to do it,” replied Harry with a smile. “I was able to teach it to a few others, including Hermione.”

“A corporeal Patronus?” Remmy blurted out in even more awe. “What form does it take?”

“A stag,” Harry said and winked at his father. James dropped his fork with a clatter. Harry chuckled at his father’s reaction. “Yeah, that was pretty much the same way our time-line’s Remus reacted when he saw it.”

“I don’t get it,” Remmy said. “What’s the deal about a stag?”

“Never mind, we’ll tell you later,” Lily stated, she was quite content that two of her three children didn’t know that their father was an illegal Animagus.

“Do you play Quidditch?” Alice asked, immediately changing the subject. Harry nodded and Alice began to bounce in her seat. “Oh, are you a Chaser like me and Dad?”

“No, he’s a brilliant Seeker.” Ron said, joining the conversation. “Speaking of which, we have got to play a game tomorrow.”

“Ron, I don’t have a broom,” Harry argued.

“Sod that!” Ron replied to which his mother chastised his language.

“Just borrow one of the school’s brooms,” Ginny offered. “We can have a pick-up game; the Weasleys versus the Potters.”

For some reason, Ron looked nervously between Harry and his own brother, Charlie, who was a fairly decent Seeker. “Can’t we do one time-line against the other? I want Harry on my team.”

“Cor blimey!” Remmy exclaimed as he saw Harry’s belated birthday present, or rather sixteen years’ worth of belated birthday presents, from both his father and Godfather; a Nimbus X2. “Can I ride it, Harry?”

“Not until after he rides it, Remmy,” Alice said. “And only after I get to ride it.”

“I’m afraid I’m going to have to use best mate privileges here, kids,” Ron said as he strolled across the school’s Quidditch pitch. “I’m first after Harry.”

“No you’re not,” stated Harry, as he threw his arm around his significantly taller sister’s shoulders. “My *little* sister goes after me.”

“Fine, you gonna test it before the game?” Ron asked, as Hermione stomped up to the group.

“Yeah, I reckon I give it a once around...” began Harry.

“HARRY JAMES POTTER!” Hermione scolded her fiancé and Remmy once again muttered in fear “...*all three names...*” Hermione placed her fists on her hips as she continued to berate Harry. “Your family hasn’t seen you fly yet!”

“So?” Harry questioned.

“So you will not fly like you normally do! You will scare them to death if you do! You will fly the way I fly, until they become accustomed to your... style!”

“Fly like you do?” Ron sputtered. “But then he’d barely leave the ground!”

“Yes, that’s my point!” Hermione concluded.

“Hermione, dear,” Lily said trying to calm the situation. “James and Alice are both skilled flyers. I watched them fly hundreds of times. I won’t be afraid when Harry flies.”

“But you don’t understand...” Hermione began to argue.

“It is alright, Hermione.” Lily placed a hand on the younger witch’s shoulder and continued to Harry, “You can fly anyway you like, dear.”

“Thanks, mum,” Harry beamed, and in a blink of an eye, he was rocketing up into the sky.

Lily stepped closer to James as Harry became a speck in the cloudless sky. The first thought that entered Lily’s mind was that the broom was faulty somehow. “Is it supposed to go so fast?” She asked her husband. But before he could answer, Harry came plummeting back to earth. Now she knew the damn thing was defective and that Harry had lost control! Lily’s heart was dropping almost as fast as her son was.

“Oh my God!” James exclaimed, as he started to mount his broom. Lily knew that he couldn’t reach their son in time; Harry was falling too rapidly.

If Lily or James had bothered to look at the other people from the alternate-time-line, they would be surprised seeing that their reactions were completely different from theirs. Luna was putting flowers in her hair as Neville was telling her the magical properties of some of those flowers. The other Ginny was trying to teach her counterpart some tricks on how play Quidditch. While Ron was idly cleaning dirt out from under his fingernails, as if Harry’s life and death predicament was boring him. But the most extreme reaction belonged to Hermione; she was the only one of the five intently following Harry’s descent. However she showed no sign of fear, but actual ire toward her fiancé.

By the time James had mounted his broom, Harry was less than half a second from crashing into the ground. Lily’s breath was taken away when her eldest son’s broom took a ridiculously sharp turn and propelled itself bare centimeters above the surface of the pitch. He was flying so low that his robe was actually ripping up a narrow path in the grass.

“HARRY!” Hermione angrily shouted. “HARRY JAMES POTTER, GET BACK HERE, NOW!”

Harry skimmed the ground as he turned around, this time kicking up dirt along with the grass. What he did next made James fall off his broom which fortunately was only three feet in the air. Their son stood up on his broom and rode it like a very thin surfboard. The broom and rider slowed to a halt in front of Hermione.

“Apologize!” demanded the brunette witch.

“For what?” Harry asked, completely perplexed.

“You scared your mother!” Hermione chastised him while indicating Lily.

Shocked at his mother’s condition, Harry hopped off his broom and rushed to her. He enveloped the now ghostly pale woman in a hug and guiltily muttered, “Sorry, mum.”

“Where’d you learn to fly like that?” Lily asked while patting his body down, checking Harry for any injuries. “If one has the audacity to call that flying!”

“Nobody actually taught him. But Oliver Wood told him to once ‘Get the Snitch or die trying’. Harry took him literally.” Hermione informed Lily. “But honestly, that stunt he just pulled was nothing compared to the time with the Horntail...”

“What? Wait, no, I don’t want to know,” Lily stammered. “Not just yet, at least. Maybe you can tell me after my heart returns to its proper location.”

“That. Was. AWESOME!” Remmy cheered after he had picked his father up from the ground. The boy ran up to his new older brother and demanded; “You’ve got to teach me how to do that!”

“No, he will NOT!” Lily and Hermione commanded in unison.

“I claim Harry as my Seeker!” called James, as he brushed grass from his robes and then added with pride: “I’ve never seen anyone fly like that!”

“Don’t encourage him!” again, Lily and Hermione ordered in unison. Both women had their fists on their hips and were standing in the almost exact same posture.

“Um, that’s kind of eerie,” Harry said to his father.

“How similar they are? Yes,” James agreed. “Well, apparently it’s true; all boys end up marrying someone a bit like their mother,” James added and patted his eldest son on the back.

Lily and Hermione shared a smile as the younger witch said to the senior: “Do try to keep you man in line.”

“Only if you do.”

The End.

Author’s Notes: Thanks to everyone who took the time to read this, and even bigger thanks to those who left reviews; I really do appreciate it. Also, huge thanks to my beta sasqch.